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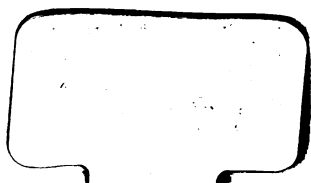
ANGELS AND MEN.



WELLEN SMITH.



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ANGELS AND MEN.

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ST. JOHN'S GATE PRESS, CLERKENWELL, E.C.

# ANGELS AND MEN,

A Poem,

BY

WELLEN SMITH.

*Dedicated by permission to Alfred Tennyson, Esq., Poet Laureate.*

“ \* Common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears  
Of angels, to the perfect shape of man.”

*Tennyson.*



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1876.

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## DEDICATION

TO

ALFRED TENNYSON, ESQ.

Port Laureate.

---

I'VE seen a lark, warm-brooding in her nest  
Amid the laughing corn, grow rapturous,  
And flutter almost humanly with joy,  
To watch her minstrel-mate go up the sky  
So merrily, while pent-up melodies  
Would warble in her throat ;—her life below ;—  
Her love above ;—and all between them song.  
So I to thee—my tuneful Tennyson !  
Thou dwellest in the mountains, next the stars ;  
Thou swayest in the shout of worshippers,—  
Singing upon the topmost bough of life,—  
Higher than thrones of kings or temple-spires.

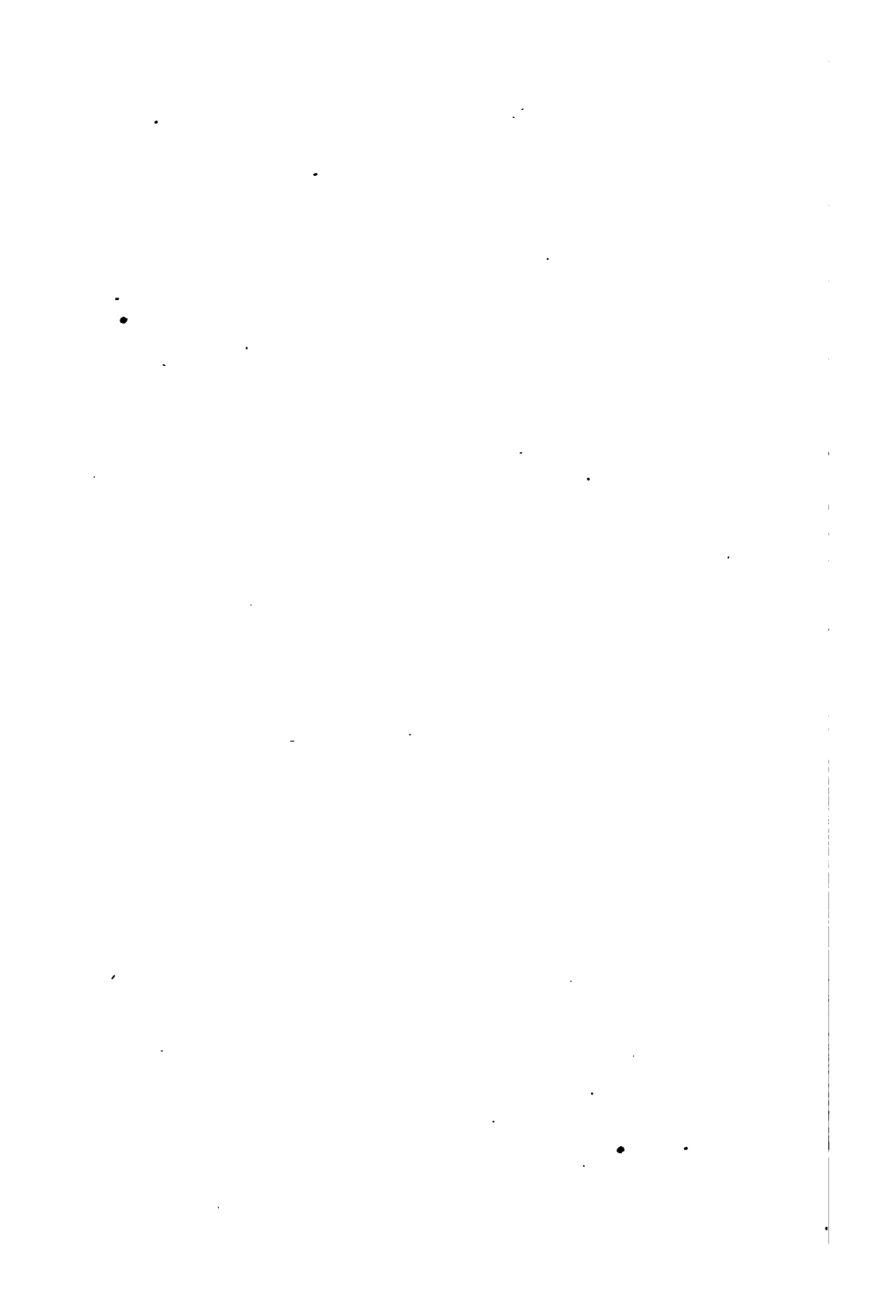
The loves of aching hearts toil up to thee ;  
And bruised souls, sigh-burdened, try to climb  
Into the gladsome presence of thy song.  
But I, who watch thy raptures far below,  
Find my short summer in the blossom-land,  
Meandering with the streams, or nestling in the  
grass ;—

Or, perched upon a lowlier bough, am pleased  
To rock my musings into drowsy rest,—  
With fragrant pastures underneath, and thou,  
The sweetest song-bird of our native land,  
Above me hovering, morning, noon, and night.  
My Tennyson ! hush thy loud throat awhile,  
And, patient, listen to my song of life.  
The thoughts that came and would find utterance,  
At early dawn or midnight, will be blest,  
If, trembling with the music learnt from thee,  
They give one spirit rest, or set one free.

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# ANGELS AND MEN.

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## BOOK I.

---

Of angels who, at rest, still seek to know,—  
Of men who, knowing, seek for rest, I sing :—  
I trembling sing, who erst have sung unheard,  
Except by willing audience at eve,  
Reclining in the calm of innocence  
Beneath the shade of some song-haunted oak ;—  
Or when, low crouched on rude, uneasy seats,  
They fenced the glowing hearth, and forward leaned  
With eager faces propped upon their knees,  
And thus drank in the pleasure of my song :—  
Rough-handed, hearty children of the soil !  
So much at home with nature, that their lives  
Were all a-field ;—their children and their flocks,  
Contented with the blossom and the fruit,

The honey and the milk, the quiet sky  
And Sabbath-keeping meads :—they lived one life ;  
But I, who loved the fragrance of old books—  
Old cloisters, where the incense of the past  
Still hung about the place—lived many lives ;  
Grew restless as my knowledge grew, and sung  
As one that heeds not song nor audience,  
But lets the numbers and the notes flow on  
Adown the lazy hours, while yet the soul  
Is wrapt in deeper dreams. So did I sing  
Of hills and woods, of stars and flowers ; and now  
I sing of Life—that motion in the heart of God  
Which gave e'en Him, when resting all alone  
Within the dumb and dark abyss of old,  
An outward yearning and a silent joy ;—  
Then leapt into a strong, resistless stream.—  
Flowed glittering in the joyousness of light ;—  
Then strengthened to a river broad and full,  
And then outwidened to a shoreless deep,  
Where float the joys and treasures of all worlds,  
With merry crews and solitary waifs,—  
Gay, beautiful, and music-laden ships,  
And black crime-burdened hulks, whose heavy holds

Make the great ocean heave as if it sighed,  
And sunlit sails firm-set with Heaven's breath,  
And drifting wanderers upon the waste  
Without a purpose or a name ; but all  
From morn till night—from night till welcome dawn—  
Intent to sight the far-off land of rest.  
And this the boundless, restless life I sing !

Give ear, my brothers, wounded in the dust !  
And in my broken utterances hear  
The distant sounds of your deliverance.  
The spirits of the patient dead do blend  
Their pity with the incense of your prayers :  
And, as your thoughts grow ardent o'er my song,  
Your longings shall compel the blessed feet  
Of angels to come down and comfort you.  
For you I sing, while yet the ruddy wine  
Doth sparkle in my hand ;—Come, quaff ye then !  
And in the weeper's joy let me behold  
A poet's prize and immortality.



Oh! come, Sweet Angel of the Presence! Thou,  
Who lookest ever on my Father's face,  
And tell me how to tell the world of Him.  
I want to be His messenger to men.  
Drop honey on my lips, and guide my hand  
Until my work is done; for in my soul  
Like summer-winds in summer-woods I've heard  
By day and night strange voices come and go,—  
Loud under-wailings in the harmony  
Of all-created things, that will be heard!  
Heaven's charioteer! let slip the prophet-steeds  
And bear me up unmantled in thy car,  
That at the feet of God I may fall down.  
With angels' fingers be my harp attuned,  
And carried back to earth a-ringing still—  
Still trembling with the raptures of the skies!  
And Earth, come thou, and listen to my song!  
One burst upon thy barren withered heart  
Would music thee to blessedness and peace,—  
'Twould bring thee to thyself again, and thou,  
Repentant prodigal, would'st leap all space,  
And melt thy heart in tears on Mercy's breast.

Where Albion's Western hills slope to the sea,  
There was a cave, and o'er the dismal mouth,  
Whence came to quick mysterious ears hoarse sounds  
Of giant revelry, the ivy grew  
And shut the old sepulchral darkness in ;  
And by its side a well, whence, ever full  
And ever overflowing, silent, deep  
And cold as death, the waters crept  
Adown the broken rocks in search of day.  
Above it frowned a fretted stony brow ;  
And only from the setting sun e'er came  
Within that place the joyfulness of light.  
And on a mossy stone, where Time had stood  
And plumed his wings, there sat an aged man,  
Amid the silent beauty, marble-still ;  
Engirdled with a patient dignity,  
Yet flushed impatiently with human hopes ;  
Expectant of the promise of his life :  
His suffering day had passed, and left some trace ;

His waiting-day had come ;—his hushed repose,  
And majesty of years, and eyes of fire,  
And brow of thought, and hand of power were wrapt  
As 'twere an ancient seer's, in mystery ;—  
The locks were golden with life's evening tints,  
And every sense a sentinel to rouse  
The inner soul, when He should come for whom  
The heart had waited and the eye had watched.  
There mused he, haloed with old memories ;  
The song-birds gathered round him and awoke  
The purpose of his heart, and, lowly bowed  
Beneath the greatness of his thoughts, he spake  
Thus with himself :—

“ The hour is nigh at hand,  
And I am eager to unbosom there—  
Where never yet a tale of woe was heard—  
Before those living hearts that never sinned,  
The story of the hearts that sin and live.  
The angel oft hath told me this,—aye, more,—  
He came in undisguise but yesternight,  
And while I knelt in strong unuttered prayer,  
And in my chamber barred,—struggling in soul  
To move the great Omnipotent—he stood

Most beautiful before my unsealed eyes,  
And said, ' To-morrow, at the set of sun,  
Go stand beneath yon temple roof of trees ;  
There lift thy thoughts to Heaven ; and straight  
A change shall come upon thee, and thy guide  
Will take thee up until thy being glow  
With near approach to God.' Fly, slothful Time !  
Already hath my fancy curtained out  
The lingering light of day ; let evening come,  
And on her wings my angel-guard descend ;  
What joys await my tasting ! what a wealth  
Of happiness to revel in ! what springs  
And hills ! what vales and flowers ! what loves re-  
stored  
And loves created ! warm and human loves  
Wide-armed as charity and likest God's !  
Love lost in nearness to that heart whose love  
Draws all the hearts that love into Himself !  
So in the laughing brightness of that morn,  
An unorb'd glory shall illumine my soul,  
As pure as God is pure. And thou, proud Sun !  
Shalt shine beneath my feet, to mortal eyes  
A wonder and a blessing, but to mine

A gem upon the fleecy floor of heaven !  
But now night falls, and o'er the western wave,  
That wraps as in a silver shroud the day,  
The giant clouds pile golden offerings ;  
So shall I soon be wrapt into the light—  
Hush ! Hush ! steps are among the crisp dead leaves."

A woodman, stricken into pensiveness,  
Had wandered here to be alone, unheard,  
Unseen, to find in nature's bosom peace  
Which dwelt not in his own. "Great God," he said,  
"How beautiful to see thy first born die !—  
To get a blessing from his last warm smile !—  
To feel there's something linking us to Heaven !  
'Twas here I used to hold the tiny hand  
That came to fetch me home, and here we sat,  
She lisping questions in her childish ways,  
Too hard for me, about the blessed dead,—  
About the meaning of her tender life  
In such a world as this,—about the stars,  
Until they seemed to gather listening.  
She'd tell me that her Father made them all,  
And how the angels soon would take her up

Above the sun and crown her like a queen ;  
And often have I fancied that her hand  
Was stealing out of mine, when talking thus.  
At last they beckoned her away, and we—  
But not without a struggle prayed—we begged  
That God would lend her to us yet awhile ;—  
No answer came—the light that cheered the way  
Went out in darkness, and I—stricken, sad—  
I come and dream away my loneliness,  
And feel her hand creep softly into mine,—  
But colder, colder now. O come tears ! come !”

He passed

Into the darkening woods, nor sought reply,  
His great heart heaving like a sea, and hid  
His broad and fevered brow in both his hands :—  
Thus blinded with his grief he staggered by,  
And leaden-footed dragged his burden on.

Then came there such a hush as could be felt,  
The birds sang not, leaves on the trees were still—  
And lo ! an angel in a beam of light,  
With wings upreared by speed of downward flight !  
And pointing to the setting sun, he cried,

"This hour, Philetos, thou art glorified!"

Then trembling fell the man of years, and sighs,  
And joys, and smiles, and tears, gave glad response.

"Sweet messenger! my soul goes fondly out  
To meet thee at thy coming. Thou art he  
Whose smile hath summered all my way with  
flowers,

And oft in ardent youth, as oft in age,  
Thy hand hath kept me up. See now how Heaven  
Already tints with whitest light these locks."

The angel then in re-assurance spake:

"Philetos! named by us who watched thy life  
And saw thee reaching up with loving hands  
To grasp at us, thou art beloved on high,  
As must my presence show, who from the lips  
Of Heaven's King direct received commands  
To bring thee home. Art eager to be gone?  
The saintly hour of meditative eve  
Hath come, and this the gate of paradise;—  
Go to thy knees! and thou shalt breathe at once  
The Heaven of inspiration, and the dreams  
That goldened o'er the exile's sacred isle  
Shall gather round us, and like white-winged light

We'll cleave the wondering skies."

He slowly knelt,

Striving to chide away the dreary doubt

If seeds of life could burst the husk of flesh,

And bloom to glory in a single hour!

Until the meek-commanding voice again—

"Go on thy knees, and with closed eye-lids look

Into the depths whose waves unbroken heave

From out the hidden world ; they touch your feet,

Bringing the music and the messages

Of far off spheres, then laden with great spoils

Of human souls, God-burdened like thine own,

They roll majestic back into themselves,

Swelling the tide that breaks on yonder side ;—

To thy knees, go ! and wait to be upborne."

Thus wooed into submission there he knelt ;

And all around, from every flower and leaf,

The incense of a thousand censers rolled,

And veiled their swift ascent.

With waveless wings the angel and the sage

Went upward like a heavenly thought ; nor paused

Till on the verge of timely things they stood.



One look Philetos gave when memory placed  
Her warm hand on his heart ; the angel saw't,  
And saw the tearful conflict waging there ;  
But seemed not, lest a love so beautiful  
Should back recoil within a stone-cold nest,  
And there be chilled into a lifeless thing.  
Oh, how is man a vassal and a lord !—  
A king that rules all kingdoms but his own,—  
A Samson when the brazen gates are closed,—  
A fool—a babe—in fair Delilah's lap.  
Thus weak, yet strong, the good Philetos seemed, as  
    earth,  
The land of struggling faith, beneath them rolled ;  
Its loves, its dreams, its great expectancies,  
Came like a flash of light, revealing spots  
Long hidden in the pleasant dim-seen past :  
From these he scarce could turn away ; like one  
Who's outward-bound in life, when sinks the  
    home,  
That warmed his nursling fancy at its hearth,  
Behind the trees, o'er which the curling smoke  
Bears up the sky a mother's prayers for him ;  
He feels his watery soul suffuse his eyes,

And nature mercifully hides in tears  
A scene the broken spirit could not bear!—  
Or as the bride, when o'er her sacrifice  
Twin angels stoop—Desire and Memory,—  
Who clinging loves the heart that's yoked with  
hers,  
Yet feels the edge of separation keen,  
That cuts the tendrils of her soul from home,  
Whereout her life had sapped its purest joys!  
Thus gazed, thus felt the ancient man; but quick  
The dim distressful eye met glance with glance;  
And like a warrior struck, his courage gripp'd  
The sinews of his heart and strung his soul.  
A moment's pause,—the angel and the man  
Stood side by side and looked into the night.  
Away thro' a still and a starless night,  
While Luna thrice had walked her watchful rounds,  
They sped their eager flight, nor breathed a thought,  
Tho' thoughts did thicken fast within, as now  
A soul in naked shame fled by alone;  
Or now an Abraham would bear along  
A Lazarus in his bosom. Silent all  
Besides; till darkness paled to twilight dim,

And twilight blushed into a perfect day ;  
And on the brink of that mysterious world  
They stood, where spirits wait to be re-clothed.  
There night and day at beyance stand ; one pole  
Is ever true to Heaven's glow, and one  
Points out into the miserable void.  
A fair eternal spring keeps constant phase  
Towards the golden heavens, smiling up  
In beauty like a garden of the Lord ;  
Amid whose bowers music fluttered free  
And carolled round the meditative groups.  
But all the southern hemisphere was chilled  
With winter, cheerless, horrible, and dark ;  
Illumed with fitful flashes from its seas,  
As ever and anon a spirit damned  
Would plunge to quench its immortality.  
No grouping there, all lived and walked alone,  
For ever wandering, silent, one by one.  
As waits the felon eager for his doom,  
So waited they ; if haply greater woe  
Would crush the writhing life that could not die,  
Or pierce the soul with such eye-blinding pain  
That memory could not gaze out o'er the past ;

Through one unstarred, unbroken night they wait,  
Unfed by any hope, like giants bound.

The heart that grovelled like a serpent once  
Was there, and, closely dogging all his ways  
In awful dumb revenge, the soul that loved  
His honied words and ate the fruit he gave,  
Though God with his own finger blasted it.

The man who strewed the pathway of his fame  
With wounded men and weeping women, hid  
Crouched in the dark as if he heard the hounds  
Of vengeance barking close upon his heels ;  
He looked for one to quench his burning thirst,  
But in the wilderness himself had made  
No spring of comfort streamed, no flowers grew,  
To cool his lips with e'en a drop of dew.

The fool who mocked the name of God was there,  
A learned fool ! to clip the wings of faith,  
Then in defiance bid her mount the stars  
And bring the tidings back of Deity !

To blind the eyes of reason with thick folds  
And then triumphantly command her search  
For truth ! how empty-handed did she grope  
Her crooked pathway back to thee, poor fool,  
And cried with latest breath ' There is no God ! '

The double-hearted man who saintly knelt  
In admiration of the beautiful,  
And told the world how happy were the good,  
Most miserable seemed o'er all the rest.  
In agony his spirit fluttering strove  
To beat with feeble wings the night away,  
And dart into the light on yonder side ;  
But earth-dust weighted every feather down,  
And like an eagle chained he strove in vain.—  
Or as the stag, when pressed by hungry hounds,  
Leaps o'er the rocks into the welcome flood  
To battle with a foe more merciful,  
And strives against the rapids, bearing high  
His antlers o'er the foam, till nature fails  
With weariness and pain,—and in the depths  
He faintly, slowly, struggles after life,  
But sinks the while, and ends the mystery

Of dumb existence in a silent grave.—  
So struggled he, so failed, but not to end  
The curse of long endurance far from God ;—  
Unless the yearning Godhood shall come down  
Again to captive make captivity.

Philetos and the angel both were touched  
With human pity, and, for pity's sake,  
Had dared to carry comfort to the lost.  
They wandered, musing, down the verdant slopes,  
That led into the broad'ning fields of light,  
Where bloomed an undecaying Eden still,  
And there o'erwhelmed with rapture down they sat.

The angel then—"Thou seest here the end  
Of all His travail, where no sweat-drops fall ;—  
And yet this is but Heaven's outer court,  
Between the sacrificing earth and God !  
The world of naked spirits,—souls unrobed !  
Where all are bless'd in spirit-blending bliss ;—  
Unclothed now the eye, unstopped the ear ;—  
All eye—all ear ;—infinity to scan,  
And infinite capacities and tastes.

Here soars the poet-soul its homeward flights ;  
Or like a storm-bird rides the uplifted waves,  
That raise him up in vehement desire  
To mingle with the sky, and from their tops  
To catch a glimpse of Heaven. Here dwells the  
meek

And patient sufferer, side by side with him  
Who rode triumphant in a martyr's car,  
And set the spheres he passed aglow with fire.  
And here the venerable child of earth,  
Who lived a faithful life unto the end,  
Ungirdled and unsandelled, come to rest,  
Clad in the pride of goodness and of power,—  
Wide-hearted too was he, and merciful  
To all created things ; a glorious sun !  
That kept the generations all a-gaze,  
And tinged the world, when he went down the sky !  
Here came that Just One, and upon His wings  
The new-created penitent was borne ;  
A trophy captured from the fiend-foe.  
Oh ! how he clung despairingly to drag  
That lost one back again ; until a beam  
Of light, from out the upper world of joy,

Struck like a dart upon his brazen brow,  
And down—down in the fiery lake he fell,  
Engulphed in ruin merciless and fixed.  
And here Heaven's children flock, like folded lambs,  
Or play upon the sunny slopes of bliss,  
Or nestle in the dreams that gild  
Their upward hopes ;—to angels next in love,  
And next in favour with the Highest Love ! ”

Thus ending, silently they mused, and then  
One white and beautiful in matron grace  
Just swept across their presence like a dream,  
And touched the human lips with such a kiss,  
Weighted with sweetness of his childish days,  
And warm with consonant humanity,  
That then he knew, and felt that he was known,  
And nursed the comfort and the gladness long.

Then straight flew down the watchers from their  
towers,  
And all the cloudless firmament was full  
Of restless glory, like a sea of light !  
And clinging to his guide Philetos cried  
“ I tremble—shelter me beneath thy wings !



This hour brings back the thoughts of ancient days,  
When God's forgiveness calmed my storm-tossed  
breast,

And promised to bring me to a place of rest."  
Then o'er the waveless calm soft music came,—  
"The Spirit and the waiting bride say 'Come,'  
And whosoe'er is willing let him come,  
And freely from the living waters drink."

The angel then—"Lift up thine eyes on high !  
A penitential tear best veils the light  
That haloes glory so unbearable ;  
This sacred minstrelsy doth welcome us ;  
And in thy pilgrim days I've seen thee leap  
With life, when on thy dreaming fancy struck  
These sounds of home."

He, fearing lest his voice  
Should mar the blest enchantment, gently breathes,  
"Oh music sweet ! soft-blending with my joys !  
I'll dwell for ever here !" Then like the songs  
Of children, wafted through the dome of night—  
"A crown of purest gold ! a robe of white !

A home where God is love, and God is light."  
Then fired into a loving ecstasy  
The angel thus—"Philetos, rise from dreams  
And taste the honied rest of fulfilled life ;  
Thou shalt give joy to angels, ere thy world  
Hath waked once more its little hemisphere  
Of sleep. Hold now my hand !

There's Heaven !

Upon its walls of living fire I see  
The holy watchers, eager to report  
The coming of a ransomed wanderer ;  
And there the everlasting gates of pearl  
That never shall be shut, whence music flows  
In wild crescendo or in dulcet notes—  
In thunder-voiced sublimity and power—  
Or now like water-droppings still and sweet.  
Cherubs will lift their high o'er-lapping wings  
That thou may'st enter in, and on thy breast  
Will fall the glory of the Great Unseen—  
Veiled in a Urim and a Thummim still,—  
But beautiful as Morning's jewelled light,  
When every ray awakes the thousand charms

That sleep in every dimple of her face.

Thou'st seen,—on some still lake that draws the  
moon,

That ancient love of thine, to linger o'er it,

While all the curious stars do gather round

To gaze as well, unwitting that they smile

Upon their own-created loveliness,—

Thou'st seen perchance the healing angel come

And hovering touch the waters, and the thrill

Go rippling to its utmost bounds ; and lo !

A thousand moons would dance among the stars

In joyful mazes on that troubled lake ;

And, as with angels' lives in Heaven, each one

The image of the bright original.

Now soon thy thirsty heart will reach the fount

Where burning zeal and fainting toil may kneel,

And with their prone lips drink the stream of life :

Thou'st tasted of its waters when below,

Unwittingly, from out an angel's hands ;

And secretly I've seen thee smite thine own

In rapturous delight, and bless His name

Who led thee unperceived the desert through.

Let Memory unroll the sacred past,

And see how oft her fair recording hand  
Hath trembled o'er a word, unfinished still !  
Or for a word hath found a deeper sense  
In one round tear ;—or in some darker hour,  
When sin hath like a storm-cloud pressed thy soul,  
And night could give no promise of a morn,  
The faithful scribe hath left a blank  
To speak of woe so inexpressible.  
But look again, and thou wilt see how oft  
Her pen was like the lark at merry dawn,  
Forth flowing streams of God-ward ecstasy.  
And when I bathed thy weary feet with dew,  
And brought thee honey in the honey-comb,  
Remember how thou caution'd'st memory  
To write the record clear in words of gold ;  
And how a little joy would make thee sing  
The live long day, and on into the night  
Alone, and on still to the cold grey dawn :  
For, in yon circling orb of azure light,  
The soul that sings is like the lonely bird  
Which night hath cherished into mirthfulness ;  
When sorrow sleeps in charity's soft lap,  
His song like incense fills the silent sky,

And canopies the world in melody.  
Thou wert that night bird oft, and by thy side  
I've stood to calm thy music-throbbing heart,  
Until thy song hath tranced e'en me thy guest,  
And drawn celestial visions round thy couch."

Then, suddenly, as in a glory-mist,  
With human grace attired, a virgin stood,  
Barring their leafy way with trembling light,  
Bright as the moon, with white enfolding clouds  
About her feet, and in her hand a branch  
Of cluster-laden vine ; ripe as her lips,  
The ruddy fruit shone lustrous with the fire  
Of life indwelling, waiting to outflow ;—  
And thus she spake :—

"Your converse loud awoke  
The echoes of my peaceful realm, and drew  
Me forth to welcome you. My home is here  
Within the sight of Heaven, but my heart  
Is wedded to the struggling sons of men.  
They call me Hope ; the angels, in their moods  
Of man-ward yearning, call me, in their tongue,  
The Earth-betrothed, and sometimes pity me ;

But even they know not my love nor yours.  
Come near to me, Philetos ! touch my hand ;—  
Take this, and know that when thine ancestors,  
As exiles, from the sinless garden fled,  
I snatched a sapling from the tree of life,  
And followed watching, as they weeping went,  
And vowed eternal sympathy with earth.  
My dwelling thus, in voluntary need,  
And by the love of your offended King,  
Was fixed this side yon walls of light, 'until  
The last of human kind shall pass this way.  
Within my fair domain the sapling grew,  
Deep-rooted as your mountains, and as high ;—  
Six thousand years it grew, and still it blooms  
A tree of life for peasants and for kings !  
Take this—press out the living wine, and straight  
Thy blood shall quicken through its courses till  
Thou sit'st with angels ;—then remember Hope !  
How in the hour of want she brought thee sweets  
Whose purple clusters still of Eden bloomed,  
And gave delicious antepast of Heaven.”

She paused, and blending with the sky was gone ;

But still her beauty lingered in the eyes  
That drunk the blinding light so eagerly,  
And to the brain-born presence of sweet Hope  
Philetos thus poured out his human love ;—  
“ Divine Evangel ! childhood’s gentlest nurse !  
Strong man’s fond partner ! and the prop of age !  
How by the side of my sick soul thou’st sat  
A comforter, between my parching lips  
Distilling drop by drop thy honey-dews !  
Come near that I may lay me at thy feet  
And bathe them with my grateful tears !  
Come ! share the triumphs thou hast helped to win :  
How keen my sword, how strong my arm in fight,  
When, round my brow, the halo of thy smiles  
Like glory played ! and ever to my ear  
Thou brought’st the pleasant sounds of distant song.  
Oh, who can sing alluringly as Hope,—  
Prophetic Nightingale of Paradise !”  
“ Ye angels know her not,” he cried, “ as we ;—  
Her ministrations never tire the heart,—  
She never tells the sick man of his ills,  
Nor waits to make him weary with her care ;  
But brings a downy pillow for his head,

With just a word of comfort, then departs ;  
Enough of sweet within the cup she'll drop  
To make us long for more."

Then thus the guide—

"Enough ! among these flowers let us recline,  
And God-ward as our faces so our thoughts.  
'Tis morning now in Heaven, or such as we  
May morning call, where nature never dies  
Nor sleeps, but moves in all her loveliness  
From change to change,—where every change is  
law,

And law is love, and love perennial life ;  
A law, a love, a life, like triune rays,  
That from the glory-cloud o'er-flood the vast  
And gorgeous temple with a hallowed light,  
And dwells in every stone like inlaid fire.  
The Father of creation worketh there,  
As wisdom, power and goodness ever work ;  
And in His deep unuttered will is law.  
The Son as on a mount of blessing sits,  
A living visible Divinity ;  
His forehead bearing still its manly form,—  
And from His lips the love-words sweetly flow.



The Spirit is the life, that in each heart  
Reveals the law, and works it out in love.  
'Tis there, beneath the cross-crowned towering dome,  
Thou'lt meet the vast conclave of God's first-born,  
And with thy single voice relate the tale  
Of life, as full of mystery to them  
As their's to thee. When at thy words arise  
The swelling waves of loud applause, then strike  
The harp that shall be in thy hands and sing ;—  
Sing them a song of thy beloved earth !  
How it shall be a dwelling place for them ;—  
How e'en the children learn from mothers' lips  
To pray to be like them ;—and e'en the men  
Take measure of their stature as from them :  
So shall the soul of such sweet music walk  
That living sea, and lull it into rest.  
Or, when the story of thy conflicts stirs  
A deep, unuttered passion in their breasts,  
Then pause, as thou would'st pause when o'er the sky  
The murmuring storm-clouds thicken in their wrath,  
When by the lightning torch thine eyes can see  
Up to the high and holy place,—and when  
Thy wonder stands with bare uncovered head,

Amazed and trembling lest the coming burst  
Of God's own thunderings should split the world ;—  
So pause,—if o'er thy congregation comes  
A restlessness, and gaze to gaze they speak  
As 'twere in low and anxious whisperings ;—  
'Twill be perhaps, that quitted by the hand  
Of God's omnipotence, some angel-soul  
Pushed on from pity to rebellious pride,  
Shall from the giddy heights of Heaven fall,  
And, grown ambitious in an hour, shall think  
From anarchy and discontent and sin  
To form a kingdom for himself on earth,  
And rule without a rival there, and Heav'n  
No longer be the asylum of your kind.  
Angels may fall as they have fallen before,  
And, unlike man, be unredeemable :  
But thou hast song enough upon thy tongue,  
If but the Spirit give thy message wings,  
To keep the high o'er-vaulting arches full  
Of harmony until the end of time ;—  
Then shall there be but One—the All in All !—  
Nor man rebel again, nor angels fall."

While thus he speaks two messengers appear  
In graceful flight above the battlements,  
Bearing their steady way adown a beam  
Of hazy light ; and with their wings wide-spread,  
Alight with noiseless feet upon the sward ;  
They silently embrace the angel-guide,  
And smiling waive farewell ; content he turns  
To take his earth-ward flight, and waives farewell.

Philetos, folded quickly in their arms,  
Went up the sky in triple bonds of love,  
While gentle and harmonious sounds were heard,  
Like evening voices, blending all in one,  
Until a veil of glory closed them in.

The bright and heavenly city now arose,  
In spire and turret, tower and hill, to view,  
With burning beauty, kindling in his heart  
New hopes, that e'en eternal seas of bliss,  
With all their mighty moods, could never quench.  
O'er all he saw the heaving incense waive  
Its cloudy folds on high, instinct with life ;—  
As earth in rougher mood doth paint her skies

With her own fires, when brood the pregnant clouds  
O'er some great-hearted city, big with breath  
Of curse and blessing, sigh and song alike :—  
Or as the calm unfathomable blue,  
Sometimes in days of sweet tranquillity,  
Above the slumberous bosom of a vale,  
Where peasant simpleness and cordial wealth  
Go hand in hand, to hear the good man's voice  
Relate the blest evangel of the skies ;—  
Where nought disturbs the consecrated air  
But murmuring brooklets longing for the sea,  
Or chimes of sabbath bells, with all that tells  
The weary spirit of a rest ;—or laugh  
Of feather-hearted childhood, rippling up  
From crystal fountains ;—or the merry lark  
That carries to the Giver of all good  
Our thankfulness—our song of praise to Him,  
Who bids the valleys stand so thick with corn,  
That they shall laugh and sing :—Such beauty lives,  
Such sweetness breathes o'er such a sacred spot,  
That all is mirrored up within the lake  
Of peaceful blue, that sleeps above it all !  
E'en so this heaven gazed upon itself

Reflected in th' immeasurable deep—  
Th' unquivering abyss above it all.  
Around the walls the songs of nature rung,—  
The gratitude of nations pourèd in  
A sea of harmony ; and voices came  
From everything that felt the blissfulness  
Of life ; and breezes played mysterious airs  
Among deserted harps, whose angels God  
Had sent on merciful behests to man.  
Thus, when the Eternal gates flew open wide,  
Came counterswells of music, deep and strong ;  
And wave saw wave, and, like two lovers, rushed  
Wild to the glad embrace. Wave upon wave  
Came like a flood from out the glassy sea,  
While myriad-voicèd nature's wavelets leapt  
To kiss the golden strand, and pourèd out  
The sparkling tribute of their love to God.  
A missive cry from earth pierced every sound,  
Imploring vengeance on the power that crushed  
A struggling peoples' prayer for liberty.  
A shout from Cain-marked cursèd brothers came  
From off the sea, when, springing to a cliff  
Of Albion's shores, they felt that they were free !

And straight the shout went up to Freedom's God.  
A new-born star leapt into life, and felt  
The stream of being pulsate in its heart,  
When all the sister worlds sang out for joy,  
And hither came the universal song.  
But chief the earth that flowered in the smile  
Of Heaven's brightest sun, sent music up ;—  
Ten thousand voices,—tributary streams  
That flowed into a deep one-hearted flood.  
The lightnings cried—"We're quick to do Thy  
will."

The depths replied, "And we to be Thy chariot."  
Lions in the forests, and whales in seas,  
And eagles from the barren eyrie heights,  
Felt all their autocratic kingly power,  
And told the world that God had made them strong.  
The flowers sang, "We are Thy censurers, Lord!"  
"And we," the breezes sighed, "Thy priests, to  
wave

The perfume through Thy temple." And the man,  
The great high priest of nature—he alone  
Who entereth within the veil—replied,  
"And I Thy servant, Lord, who dares to love

The Power that breaks me, and to sacrifice  
A life upon the stairway of Thy Throne,"

Thus did the yearning world, and all the worlds,  
Pour in their tributary wealth of song.

Then, in an instant, round the golden gates,  
Thronged cherubs limbed in light, and softer forms  
Of seraphs, and the gentle presences  
Of angels various in loveliness :  
And with a mighty voice their chieftains told  
The old celestial hills that one had come  
For whom He died who lives for evermore.  
And then in orderly array they stood,  
With trumps and palms, and high o'er-tipping wings,  
Like an interminable grove, to guide  
Philetos, bending with a weight of awe,  
Across th' ærial plain, unto the fount  
Where faith had often drunk a quenching draught.  
Him thither led they cheerfully to drink,  
And purify the last remaining dregs  
Of earthly life: He, bowing down, drank free,  
And soon the nectar ran through all the gates

And high-roads of the soul, o'er-flooding sight  
And memory, until, as if asleep,  
He lay entranced with immortality,  
Unwitting all the eyes that gazed on his,—  
The angels' fingers playing with his locks,—  
The fair and cautious hands that gently touched,—  
And many beauteous groups that watched him there.

END OF BOOK I.





## BOOK II.

### DESIRE.

---

“Thou stoodest at the threshold of the scene  
Of busy life ; with timid step I cross’d it ;  
How fair it lay in solemn shade and sheen !  
And thou beside me, like some angel posted  
To lead me out of childhood’s fairy land,  
On to life’s glancing summit, hand in hand !”

Schiller’s *Wallenstein*, after Carlyle.



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## BOOK II.

---

God's heavens throbbed with angel-life that day,  
His warmest light soft-goldened everything,  
And joy-plumed wings went to and fro like birds,  
Now springing from the bosom of a cloud,  
Now plunging back into its glory; yea,  
The summer of the skies sat, like a blush,  
On deathless beauty, making such a heaven  
As comes in dreams, and keeps the death-gaze fixed  
A pulse or two before the light goes out,  
When all that men have kneed to drops away.

Here flocked in long concentric lines of light,  
Winged hosts of fiery-soul'd cherubim  
And seraphim dove-coupled, bright but calm;—  
As o'er the western wave where Evening sits  
In all her ruddy wealth of beauty clad,  
The summer clouds like children gambol home,

Torch-hearted some, burning and crimson and fond,  
And some as fond but not as ardent, full  
Of tenderness, as soft as wool, and white  
As driven snow. For wide o'er all that land,  
Mountain and hill had echoed with the call—  
“A voice! a song! a tale of earthly woe!”  
And every dale and river brinked with flowers  
Smiled in deserted loveliness alone;  
For all the saintly meditative groups  
Came city-wards unto the gathering.  
There He, the human-hearted King of kings,  
Irradiant 'mong His angels sat supreme.  
His throne of glory-fired pellucid adamant  
Centred the great assembly, circling round,  
And rising tier on tier, lost in their own  
Effulgent light,—commingling like the groups  
Of far-off worlds in bright and glorious haze.  
His feet, clothed with ethereal majesty  
And ambient dazy light, shone like the waves  
That cross the fire-lit pathway to the sun.  
Silent the harps, and still the trembling wings,—  
Breathless the awe, and hushed as sieeping night,—  
While, like the mist above the infant world,

That to the gaze of angel-eyes revealed  
A man and woman, beautiful and pure,  
A tremulous shechinah slowly rose,  
Like incense offered up around the throne;  
And at its footstool knelt Philetos, bowed,  
With silvery locks o'ershadowing the feet  
Of *Him*—his Lord—his soul-enshrined Christ;  
Uplifted stood he, flushed with glory, sage  
And saint and man, redeemed from death; and free,  
And made immortal as the sons of light.  
Back from his humbled brow he tossed his locks,  
And raised his hand to speak, when music leapt  
At one heart-rending bound from every harp  
And heart and lip—like mighty thunderings—  
And rolled its deep and awful organ-peals  
Above the congregation, trembling thro'  
The vast foundations of eternal thrones.  
Strains such as these were they that nightly came  
And swelled the choral fancies of our bard,  
Who taught us how to sing, as angels do,  
Messiah's many-voicèd songs of praise.  
Loud along the skies rolls the harmonious storm;  
And in the far off peaceful firmament.



Calms to a ripple on the still deep lake  
Of an eternal quietude in God.

All now resumed their seats, for all had stood,  
Obedient to the music-thrill that lifts  
A high-archangel as it lifts a child :  
And bending low in gratefulness of soul,  
As fitting such august supremacy,  
Philetos thus began his wondrous tale ;—

“ Most noble sons of God the Good ! great  
thoughts

Of you and your celestial joys oft came  
To me on earth, at sunrise and at eve,  
In patient prayer and night-imaginings ;  
But none e'er told the glory of your state  
To be as I behold it. Late arrived  
From scenes of lesser light, with all the marks  
Of conflict still upon me, you'll forgive  
The battle-spirit burning in mine eyes,  
When I narrate the dangers of the fight ;  
For lo, I seem to glow with deity,  
To see the past a living present rise,  
Lustrous and beautiful, at memory's call.

Know then, ye first inheritors of light,

Ye that to ripe perfection sprung at once,  
That man is schooled from lesser life to higher;  
And, like a world, evolves mysterious types  
Of being, struggling upwards, like a flame.  
As youth through manhood flows to quiet age,  
*Desire thro' conflict* fights its way to *rest*.  
DESIRE—to know all truth, and love all life,—  
Thro' CONFLICT—first with sense, and then with  
    faith—  
To REST—more sweet, more calm than sleep or  
    death.

My cradle life was sweetly sunned with smiles,  
As when a nursing mother leaned above  
My couch, and in my laughter-dimpled face  
Would read a sad uncertain prophecy.  
Still were there smiles for *me*, that made sweet May  
For ever in my sky; those were the times  
Of flowers and singing birds and downy sleep;  
When nightly ye kind messengers of peace  
Kept vigils while I dreamt. All was a dream!  
Whose fairy music lingered with the light,  
Amid the bowers of fancy. Visions came,

Strange fire-lit visions—and my childhood sighed  
For night to bring a sweet oblivious draught,  
That I might dream again. They said that God  
Was calling to the soul to come to Him  
Whene'er we dreamt. My mother often prayed,  
And honey-laden with her prayers I've slept,  
That God would speak in whispers to her child :  
Her mother-heart could ask no more than this ;  
And this, the still small voice, hath calmed the sea—  
The battle-roar—the storm of passion's night.  
But she soon winged her timid heart away,  
And in the paradise I've passed, doth rest,  
How often, wet with summer dews, the night  
Enwrapped me at her grave for pity's sake  
When the sighs of the sad yew trees above,  
And the upward face that slept far below,  
Peopled the cloistered tomb with mysteries.  
The moon-smile seemed too queenly and too cold :  
But there was fire within, heaven-kindled fire ;  
And sorrow wrung soft music from my heart,  
The first awakenings of poet-power ;—  
To thee, my mother, warbled fondly out,  
My first desires to utter all I felt.

Thy death my life ! the silence of *thy* soul  
The utterance of mine. Rest, fond one, rest !  
Ye spirits unbegotten will rejoice  
To know and welcome her who mothered me.  
'Twas at the breathless hour of middle night,  
When poverty was housed with charity,  
And Mercy gently threw her mantling robes  
Around the shivering shoulders of despair,—  
The rain did piteously lament for earth,—  
The howling winds were shouting to the bolts  
Of wrathful Heaven to spare the trembling world,  
When I forth wandered 'mid the ghostly tombs  
To gather thoughts of God and things to come.  
The tempest echoed through the dome of night ;  
Yet like a grey-robed seer the abbey stood,  
Familiar with the lightnings and the storm.  
Within the solemn shade of cloisters old  
I waited, if the passion-wearied night  
Might fall to sleep ; and in an awful pause,  
I heard loud sad soul-heavings from a cell,  
And at its bars of iron, listening, leaned.  
The worshipper was heedless of the storm,  
His spirit-lashings were not tempest-born :

Nature might roar itself to agonies,  
And roar itself to rest again, yet he  
Would in his deep heart-throbbings feel it not ;  
He nightly struggled with an infinite  
More graspless than the skies, stronger than storms.  
An uncontrollable heart-utterance came  
Upon my lips—‘ Peace, peace ! ’ and thus aroused,  
The prayerful priest, believing ’twas from Heaven,  
Exclaimed, ‘ Speak, for Thy servant heareth, Lord ! ’  
Trembling, I answered not, but silent stood,  
And in a long and weary breathlessness  
I listened to his agonies and hopes.

Emboldened that in him I heard the words  
Which had refused sound upon my lips,  
I begged admission ; and th’ unwilling chains  
And bars and creaking hinges gave consent.  
He opened too his heart to me, and sighed  
To hear my story of the grave, and said  
That Heaven would compensate joy for joy ;—  
That, when my boy-heart widened, all the world  
Would drop therein, like pebble in the sea ;—  
That nothing asked my love or needed it ;—  
That soul-and-body life was false to truth ;

A marriage bond unnatural and cruel ;—  
That an angel was the measure of a man ;—  
And death, man's dreaded foe, his truest friend.  
My thirst drank greedily this dark'ning lore,  
As flowers their bosoms fill with dews of night ;  
His cell became my home, his word my strength,  
And by the leadings of his voice I walked.  
The body clogged the spirit's eagle flight—  
Was dross among fine gold—a putrid load  
Chained to the living soul. 'Live,' he would say,  
'Live above life, for 'tis a mystery  
That draws a noble being into depths  
Where it may sink into a lawless death,  
Or tossing like a toy upon its waves  
Drift purposeless. There may be law, there is,  
There's goodness, too ; but all the precious breath  
Of life is beaten back into his face,  
As if by rude and ruffian winds, if man  
But run against the current of its power.  
Oh ! I have seen enough,' the old man said,  
'To whiten all these locks with shivering snows :  
I've seen the beautiful decay and die,—  
The virgin promise of great hopes despoiled,—

Humanity oppressed, bleeding and crushed,—

Poverty the heritage of genius,—

Folly clothed with a purple royalty,—

And man against man, and both against God.’

Angels! ’tis thus men think, and speak, and act ;

Body-pangs to them are nothing. I have seen

The tortuous fiery serpent-flame consume

As rich a casket with as rich a jewel

As ever graced the crown of king or priest ;

And as the casket burned, the jewel brightened.

’Tis thus the fever-blooded Indian falls

Before his Juggernaut, and smiles with joy,

E’en when the iron crushes out his soul.

’Tis done for God’s sake—done for *his* God’s sake.

For this men cloister up their yearning hearts,

And loathe the common air and common light ;

And as the cries of hunted nature beat

Against the prison bars, like a lone bird

Scared by the night, they stop their ears ; and lo !

The busy whirl of inner life out-dins

The ravings of the world. These kingly men

Bear in their breasts a world as mad as Lear,—

A sorrow-goaded soul, whose ministers

Were weather-beaten fools,—housed in the cairn  
And wildnesses of mountains, plucking peace  
From off the close-cropped providence of heaths;  
And he thus growing great and wise, who starved  
And pined amid the pastures of a state.  
For this, my youth was willing to be clothed  
And cowed and hooded, if I might find God.  
I walked for ever in the triple shade  
Of mournful yew-trees, buttresses and graves.  
The echo-spirit in the dreary vaults  
Sung out the loud Amen to all my prayers.  
Devotion, wrapt in saintly guise, would walk  
Like some unbosomed music-wail,  
Soft gliding into sepulchres and crypts,  
As if the dead could hear its murmurings,—  
Then steal out trembling like a child  
And ride along the golden roof,—and creep,  
As fairies creep into the bells of flowers,  
Amid the labyrinth of stony mazes,  
And under marble leaves of marble vines,—  
Then quiver up a path of sunny light,  
And make sweet melody along the way:  
Until the listening love within arose,



And with her still and prayerful voice would beg  
The gracious spirit to become her guest.

Then did I feel her hallowed foot-fall wake  
The hushed and darkened chambers of my soul ;

Till angels seemed to gaze from every niche,  
And rustle on my way like autumn leaves.

How often on the bleak highways at night,  
With not a star to bless me, when my feet  
Were weary, have I prayed to be as then !  
When holy thoughts and high desires uncalled,  
Came in at every window of the soul.

The giant-hearted dead sleeping beneath,—  
And all their giant-handed deeds around—

All ancient-lore, crisp with time's wintry frost,  
Awaiting him most worthy to unroll

And read their mysteries,—old books oppressed  
With weight of age ; and over some, as 'twere  
A tongue of fire, that quivered as one gazed,  
And thought what burning words were written  
there :—

The chain-linked book, wide open as the day,  
Shedding celestial light upon the heart,  
That lowly knelt to look into its depths :—

The calm one-mindedness of those old walls ;—  
The air that ever kept a-murmuring,  
As if its pent-up harmonies could wait  
No longer for redemption ; man alone  
Unquiet—out of unison with all.

These, ye untried and hence unruffled souls,  
Were moulding me, and schooling native powers  
To do God's work, and crush the work of sin.  
In wrestling gained I strength ; and in the night  
Of sorrow learned to sing,—grew eloquent  
When grief hard-handed grappled at my throat  
And choked the rising utterance,—seemed a man  
When want, like rude rough ruthless wind, beat back  
My baffled breath into my face, or shook  
His clenched gigantic hand against my cheek,  
And called me boy. These are the furnaces  
Where angel essences would melt away ;  
But where mankind, when tried, come forth as gold.

In me the old man seemed to live again ;—  
And proud to cheer me on the way, he'd say,—  
His desert-parched soul oft stayed to drink  
At all the nether springs that bubbled bliss,  
Till weary, sitting neath a palmy shade,

("Twas on a thirsty summer-burdened day)  
He found a sacred Teacher Heaven sent ;—  
He asked for water, and He gave him life,  
Upspringing even at that distant hour.  
He told him all that ever he had done,  
And spake the words that he had sighed to hear ;  
Unlike the fatal Teacher learned in lore  
That with its lancet skill divides the bones  
And marrow of one's faith ; and opens up  
With dangerous dexterity the fount  
And channels of the life-blood, letting out  
Its poor vitality, to watch with eyes  
Of curious science how a soul might die,  
And o'er the beautiful destruction smile.  
Strong were such men to pull a temple down !—  
Weak to put one stone upon another !  
Then, speaking from the heart, the old man said—  
' Nor men alone will be thy teachers false ;  
For woman, deemed the last best gift of God,  
Hath ne'er forgot the serpent art she learnt,  
To throw around thee all her witchery  
In triple-folds ; and in her sybil-eyes  
Thou'lt falsely read the prophecies of hope ;

Believe her not,—for thou canst know her never ;  
God made her in the night, and she is hid  
In mystery and darkness still ; yet still,  
A favourite of the Heaven she forfeited.'

He'd tell of Eden's tragedy, and point  
Into the graveyard. Then some name would drop  
Half uttered, as if sorrow forced it up  
From the bottom of his heart, and then back  
The leaden grief would fall into the deep  
Unfathomable sea of suffering.

He said the breath of woman blasted Paradise ;  
And in the mystic lore of old I read it so.  
In Grecian beauty's lap I saw the dies  
Of Empires cast from fickle fortune's hand ;  
And lo ! the name of Helen writ in flames  
Above the smouldering ashes of old Troy !  
I saw men drugged by treachery while they slept ;  
And when the drivelling senses slowly stirred,  
They called upon 'Delilah' ! first and last,  
Like Idiotcy upon a one-stringed harp.  
I saw a wise man fooled into a child,—  
A hero-life made meaningless and void,—  
A form of stateliness, touched by the wand

Of woman, shrivel to a loathsome thing.  
But still *my* heart refused to be un-taught ;  
For Queens had been my nursing mothers ! Queens  
Chosen, anointed, crowned by Nature ! Queens  
Of aching hearts and spirit-kingdoms ! Queens  
In their own right ! robed or unrobed, still Queens !  
For I remember,—in the dim far past,  
When boyhood ripened in the early spring  
Of blossom-hopes, when musing by the stream  
Why it should mimic music so,—or slow  
And silent wandering thro' the woods at eve,  
Pitying the falling leaves,—a child that leapt  
Across my pathway like a timid fawn ;  
It was a soul all light, all golden light,  
Like the eager wave that lips a western sky,  
And on the soft, black carpet of the night  
She'd steal into my rest, and bear my soul  
Away to fairy worlds, and bear it back,  
Fresh with the dews and manna of the skies.  
Her eyes were ever upon all my ways ;  
When poring o'er some poet-page, embowered  
In shady grotto ; or when cold and dumb  
In soul, and feeling far away from God ;

Still would the light of her gaze halo me :  
And, ere the spirit of my mother fled,  
It cried aloud, as if the prophecy  
Should reach the stars, that *she* should be my crown,  
My Princess—aye, my Queen ! It came not so,  
As in the current of my tale of woe  
Ye'll sadly hear. But men I loved and feared,  
Said hard and bitter things of woman's name,  
And when the old man dared unsheath his scorn,  
Methought he breathed a higher life than mine,—  
Or that the hand of rude, mysterious Death  
Had robbed him of a hoarded jewel, and he,  
To hide his anguish, called it worthless dross.  
His teachings led me into sad unrest—  
Body with soul and soul with spirit fought—  
And daily grew the gulph between our lives ;  
For slow and black as Lethe's waters seemed  
The cold and sluggish tide within his veins,  
And in his cell there seemed to ring  
A funeral dirge. 'Twas thus a muffled chime  
Became to me my truest melody ;  
'Twas thus I gave to suffering many a tear,  
And often wept when other men rejoiced.

The marriage-bells were mellowed by the boom  
Of sadness under-welling—as the sea  
Moans ever with a low monotony,  
While merry music ripples to the shore.  
The laugh of childhood came in echoes back,  
Like pent-up sobs that break in throats of men.  
In all the cadences of nature's songs—  
River warblings, ocean swellings, trees, stars—  
I heard th' unfinished wail that saddened all.  
O God ! Thou knowest,—and ye, His messengers,  
Whom He hath sent to minister to man,  
Ye know that God was far beyond my reach !  
An unknown God, walking in solitude  
Upon the great highways,—o'ergazing all,—  
Commanding all,—evolving from His will  
The silent and unutterable laws  
Of Power against our sinning brotherhood.  
The thunder was His voice to me ; His eye  
Reddened my pathway with its lightning gleams ;  
His arrows hissed around me ; and my cry  
Leapt to His ears, and asked for audience there—  
Cried for His piteous look ; but still He gazed  
Onward into the dark Eternity.

Or, when He came and tented among men,  
Behind the covert of some midnight fear  
He'd seem to crouch, as waiting for a leap.  
Within the sacred walls of my own fort  
He'd come, beneath the cloak and mask of night,  
To terrify the timid hours of sleep :  
I waked at morn to find Him—He was gone,  
Leaving the wreck and desolation there.  
Let him who can, among you, say that God  
Is in his grasp,—save in the Blessed Christ !  
My soul hath rode all seas, and climbed all hills,  
And walked in shivering nakedness at night,  
And watched His way among the stars, and felt  
Him *near*, but could not *touch* Him—'twas too dark.  
Angels, forgive the fiery flush of soul,  
Enkindled in the thought of perils past ;  
I dare not, will not ruffle your calm rest,  
But pray that ye may know and feel for man,  
And see how high above my highest flight  
His eagle-wings went on, and left me far  
Below, a poor lark singing at the sun !  
Still, like dependent lives, we walked arm-locked,  
The aged man and I, thro' many a day,—



He in the sombre stateliness of awe,  
To whom each step was full of Providence  
And over-eyeing destiny ;—and I  
Bold in the lissome sprightliness of life,—  
As one who rushes thro' the night, nor stops  
To garrule with a ghost, or heed the thing  
That blanches hearts of other men with fear.  
Years were we yoked together thus ; and once,  
At sunset, on a neighbouring hill we sat,  
Until the minster donned his grey night robes,  
And vesper songs had ceased. The light shone  
back

Like fire from the uplifted minarets,  
And quivered on the vanes, as if 'twere loathe  
To quit them till the lesser light should come.  
She came, and shone in wintry coldness down  
On us, as if the stately peeress scorned  
The flickering flames of human hearts. Ours burned,  
Not in one Pentecostal tongue of fire,  
But *his* with an ethereal phantasm-glow,  
And mine all red at heart, and darting up  
Sharp fangs that licked the jetty cheek of night.  
I bared my bosom-secrets to the monk,

Unbound my spirit-wounds, and asked for balm ;  
He closed the surface-sores, and gently poured  
A sweet Samarian oil between their lips :  
And yet the sad physician did but cure  
The outer wound, and wound the inner life.  
'Take this,' he'd say, 'unto thy comfort, son  
And yet be sure, as rivers lead to seas,  
Or spring to winter, or as life to death,  
So art thou drifting on to desert days  
Where God with all His goodness cannot come.  
And now that I may better know thy state,  
And be the true adviser of thy soul,  
Enthroning strength where weakness hath usurped,  
Tell me, my son, is there between thy heart  
And God's warm sunlight any cloud afar,  
Or any idol near that shadows thee ?'  
My father, cried I, none ; but God hath sent  
His messenger to try me ; for there stood,  
In such apparelled whiteness yesternight,  
Among the tombs, a form so beautiful,  
And tender too, that at its feet I fell  
A worshipper ; and lifting up mine eyes  
I saw her glide, soft-footed as a ghost,

Away amid the moonlit sepulchres.

She beckoned me to follow, 'mong the trees ;—

I went love-drawn where'er she led the way,

And where the night was stillest she stood still,

Yet bade me touch her not, but come again

To meet her there at stillest hour to-night ;

And as she passed away into the shades,

The fire-lit windows beamed with witnesses,

And through the cloistered silence rang a laugh,

A strange triumphant laugh—that said ' He's fallen !'

And high amid the bells it cried—' He's fallen !'

And down among the vaults it echoed ' fallen !'

The old man sighed as if some awful power

Had weighted him with twenty years at once,

With all their woes and unforgiven sins.

' Alas ! my son ! my son ! ' he homeward cried,—

Weeping as he went. I, with troubled soul,

Went silent at his side, and seemed a-tide

Between two moons, to one, to none, to both

Submission yielding. He, by all the lore

Of toilsome weary nights—by all the vows

That God had registered—by tortured rest—

By watchings and by waitings—by the stars

That saw my taper-musings, and the morn  
That blushed to find me ever unrefreshed ;—  
In all the moving eloquence of tears,  
The old man, weeping as he went, constrained  
My ravished soul to combat with the fiend ;—  
Saw as a seer my hopes unmoored, a-cast  
Upon the homeless waters, floating down  
The current of the gulf-stream, like a hulk  
Unmasted,—sail and rudder reft away ;—  
Saw me as a bird upon the mountains,  
Scared from the sheltering eaves of pitying man ;—  
Without a hand to feed me, or a note  
To warble thro' the stillness and alight  
Upon my way-worn heart, and sing of rest ;—  
A voiceless, tuneless, pityful, broken soul !  
Dumb were my lips, but my heart was on fire,  
And down within the stillest spirit-deep,  
Like a monster in the sea amid the reefs  
Of coral and the caves of pearl, a woe  
That could not rise to breathe its pent-up breath  
Into the common air, stirred at the base  
Of all my being, till we parted there  
Beneath the over-shading night,—too full

Of choking throat-woes to give sorrow voice.

The moon had hastened on her chariot wheels,  
That at her setting she may better gaze  
In thro' the lattice-work, and cheer the eyes  
Of watchers—weary watchers—lighting up  
The cabalistic page of hidden life  
With silvery beams ; and mid the waving boughs  
Of wind-rocked cypresses she winged her way  
Into my cell ; and like a child of light  
Floating on ebon waves, played shadow-chace  
Upon the wall. My voiceless comforters,  
For voiceless troubles, were my dumb-tongued books.  
O'er one of these that opened in my hand,  
The silvery flutter played ; and writ in red,  
Significant of martyr-deeds,—or more,  
Perhaps the very blood of his sad heart  
Who wrote what there I read,—were words like  
these :—

“ Better be *fronted* with a lion-grief,  
Than let him like a mole i'the dark,  
Tunnel the strong foundation of your life,  
And shake the sacred building to the ground.”  
So steeled with calm effrontery on brow

And heart, I went again into the night,—  
Like a chivalrous lord into the lists,  
To combat with a strong enchanted lance.  
The white tombs lay like love-watched winding-  
sheets,  
Above the precious dead thrown tenderly;  
And the lone night-weary moon saw her pale face  
In every lattice pane grow paler still;  
And there where night-sounds slept so silently,  
Where e'en the dropping of a leaf was heard,  
One lily-robed and whiter than the graves,  
Stood leaning, as in rest, upon a fallen  
And broken pillar. She was girdled round  
With milk-white folds, and crowned with woman's  
pride;  
And in her lily-hands was grasped the mourner's  
book.  
She waited there as patient love can wait,  
When watching for the Providence that makes  
Or mars the glory of some life-long hope;  
She waited, if perchance her watchful ears  
May be the herald, to her heart, of peace;  
To whom I tried, with tenderness, my speech:—

‘Maiden ! Angel ! Child of Earth or Heaven !  
Why walkest thou amongst the sleeping dead ?  
Would’st wake them with the music of thy feet ?  
Or hast thou mercy for the living ? Speak !’  
With love in every accent thus she spake,—  
‘ I come to seek the living with the dead,  
And finding thee will seek no farther now ;  
For in this moment is eternity.

The prophet-spirit that foretold this hour  
Is throbbing now, amidst her nightless joy,  
To see us thus, Philetos and his Zön,  
Soul-bound and never to be sundered more.’

‘ My Zön ! ’ I cried, and, falling at her feet,  
Kissing the moon-cold earth, remembered nought  
But her enfolding arms and voice, that made  
My heart rebellious in its prison house.  
The charmer charmed sweetly in mine ear,  
Downpouring, o’er my desert, tender dews  
Of rest from out the heaven of her eyes.  
She told me that the powers of her soul,  
In common insurrection, rose as one,—  
Against forbidding voices of the world ;—  
Love was the leader,—Memory the guide :—

These fanned the smouldering past into a flame ;  
With lawless haste she faced the treach'rous night,  
And love-led came to cast the virgin crown  
Of her dominion at my feet ; she begged  
That I would pity her ungoverned realm,  
And be the king and glory of the state.  
How rich the realm ! How poor the anointed king !  
I felt the thrilling passion of her woes ;—  
Around her ebbd and flowed a dirge of soul,  
Like waves around a sea-girt garrison ;  
For Zön's young heart was braced about with strength  
Spun from the warp and woof of suffering ;  
And as she told the triumph and the loss  
Of woman's life to me that night, so I  
Re-tell it now that you may love as I.

She'd gambolled in the early daisy days  
Of childhood—pure and true—and mated me  
In childish woman-fancy childishly ;—  
And climbed the hills with me, and leapt the streams,  
And wooed the merry birds to play with us,  
And made a home of flowers where we might dwell,—  
To live as flowers did upon the dews.

She traced my steps e'en when I knew it not,



And thought me half an angel when she heard  
My slender voice send up its timid praise,—  
Mine first and sweetest of a white-robed choir.

She stayed the steps of her that gave me life,  
And held the hands in prayerful attitude,  
Until the blessings that she longed for came.

'Twas she that drew the last veil o'er those eyes  
That loved to look on me, and learned to look  
Almost as lovingly and true herself.

Then as the summer days of youth came on,  
Fast-pacing fancies throbbed through all our  
thoughts,

And thoughts to passions grew ;—and we refused  
To see the very light save as it shone

From out our eyes ;—but this was in the dream  
That comes but once, when first one bosom leans  
Unto another. Colder hours at eve,

And colder autumn days, with milder light,  
And ripened fruits, and grateful hearts, bring back  
The restless spirits into calmer moods ;

But ever after, through their wintry lives,  
They feed upon the sweets they gather then.  
Still, round these early days a halo dwells,

And sanctifies them to this very hour.  
Strange Providences came and drifted us  
Away from these fond moorings—I, to shut  
And bar the iron gates upon the past,—  
And Zön—the tender Zön—to fight with fate,  
And buffet with unmerciful decrees.

She'd seen the ruthless sea, while bounding up  
One day with rageful sport, sweep o'er her pride,  
And bear away her refuge in the blast.  
The world that heard it sighed and said 'Twas God !'  
Woe callèd unto woe to cover her,  
And scattered to the winds the tiny twigs  
That care had woven for a nest ; and lo !  
The world that saw it sighed, and said 'Twas God !'  
She'd drifted o'er the waters like a waif,—  
Now sheltered—now unhoused—now loved—now  
lost,—

And when her lone ungoverned soul  
Was out upon the waste, she could not stoop  
To sin, but stooped to die, if death would come  
And take her when asleep ; oft wearied out,  
Hungry and faint, she'd lain beneath the light  
Of God's cold stars. At last a Spirit came ;—

She said it was my mother's, warm with life,  
As when her heaven-longing heart exclaimed  
That 'she should go in peace, if Zön would be  
My jewel and my Queen.' The voice, she said,  
Came to her ear in slumb'rous whisperings,  
And told her there was one 'mong men, unloved,—  
Wasting the precious drops of life on graves,—  
And growing dwarfish at the heart for want  
Of words soft-breathed from out a woman's lips;—  
And combatting with books instead of men;—  
'A man' the fond voice said, 'whose noble soul  
God made for battles, not for mummeries.  
Go, Zön! and be his dear redeemer thou!  
Find him amid the sepulchres of saints,—  
Take off the cowl! and ease the girdled heart!'

The sleeper woke, and in the morning light  
Lay reading night's dark riddles in a leaf  
Plucked from th' o'erhanging bough; and she had  
kept

The vision and the leaf close to her heart,  
In memory's most holy place enshrined.  
She thought of me far off in other times,  
Remembering in the dawn of life some hand

Had snatched me suddenly away, and hid  
The twilight flickerings of rising day  
Behind the black impenetrable shades  
Of graveyards and of cloistered cypresses.

Now milder climes had drawn her father's life  
From home, to gather gold for wants of age,  
And put a ruder health on Zön's fair cheek ;—  
But year by year, her face receding dimmed  
In mem'ry's mirror ; fancy saw her lie  
Upon a coral bed with face upturned,  
Waiting to hear the eager sou return  
At the appointed hour,—and, when the sea  
Gives up her dead, to quicken in the arms  
Of love, long absent, and to live again.  
She told me 'twas at night, a night of wrath,  
As when the great Creator walks the sea,  
That on the howling of the wind there came  
A cry for help ;—it pierced the ear of sleep,  
And springing from his rest, her father climbed  
The shivering ropes, and gazed out o'er the waves ;—  
Straight on a line of light his soul fled out,  
And by the glimmer of a fire-ball, tossed  
As signal of distress, saw the wild sea

Sweep o'er a sinking ship with a kneeling crew.  
But Zön, in anchor'd slumbers dreaming, slept ;  
Her father called her with a whisper'd kiss ;—  
She woke as by a touch of fire, and heard  
The angry night, and cried ' Father—I'll go  
To hold the helm, for I've dreamt in a dream  
Of a storm at sea, and the life-boat skipped  
O'er the waves with me, and I felt that God  
Was near walking that awful sea ; and when  
Your kiss awoke me, 'twas as if His hand  
Outspread itself in blessing on my head.'  
Meanwhile the sturdy hands unlashed the ark  
And cast her on the deep. Hard rowed the man,  
And silent stood the maid,—hands on the helm,  
And eyes and soul at sea. O Angels ! sing !  
That Heaven's word is pledged to shipwrecked man,  
' There shall be no more sea.'

Hard rowed the man,  
And silent stood the maid,—a smothered gleam  
Of sickly light came struggling thro' the chinks  
Of that black ebon sky ; down to the vales  
And up the snowy peaks went the brave bark ;  
The briny billows buffeted the maid,

But could not quench the love-fires in her eye.  
Far in the gloom rolled the huge wreck, and rocked  
And reeled, and rode on heaven-kissing waves,  
Lifting her masts like naked arms on high.  
The storm-winds swept the curses and the prayers  
Along the sky, while mariners at home  
Listened from sleepless beds unto the wail,  
And muttered—‘What an awful night at sea!’  
The ship went down! and the fisher’s bark struck!  
He to the ever greedy deeps dragged down!  
And she cast, bruised and broken, on the shore!  
Comfortless the sun-glare gleamed on the foam,  
And flashed his red wrath on the orphan maid.  
Angels! In all creation is there found  
More desolation than on God’s fair earth?  
And never on her gloomy face had dawned  
More silent desolation than that morn,  
When Zön lay broken by the moaning sea,—  
And nought appeared, and nought was heard but  
Zön,  
The sun, and the moaning sea. The day grew on,  
And birds with leaden wings wheeled heavily  
About the shore; and wreckers scented out

Their prey, and ran together as the wolves  
To blood-warm battle-fields, to gloat as they  
O'er ruin's ruthless riot ; and they found  
Among the spoils of ocean, Zön. ' A jewel !'  
They cried,—' A living Ruby !' shouted he—  
A rough-hewn heartless giant—' warm !' he cried,  
' A treasure this we can't divide, 'tis his  
Who found it '—and he lifted up her head,  
Wet and heavy with the sand, but it fell  
Like lead upon the sand again ; and fell  
The hard man's heart, when from the grave-hued  
lips

Her agonizing spirit groaned ; too near !—  
It was too much like death for such a man.  
At last the feather quivered at her lips,  
As the dream of life came back to the soul ;  
And the seamen went as in funeral march  
Bearing the precious load so tenderly.

Away o'er the waves to some ocean isle  
They bare the listless maid, who softly slept  
On a slaver's deck, as a weary child  
On a mother's neck,—while the pirates grim  
Burned with a manliness that even sin

Like theirs had never quenched, and brought her  
wool

Newshorn to be her couch, and ease the surge  
And rockings of their bark. Faint whispers hung  
About her lips, 'Father! Father!' thus;—  
And all the day and all the night they sat,  
The grim and sin-stained three, waiting the dawn  
Of those dear eyes and music of her voice.

As in a dream, they drifted o'er the sea,  
And all the eyes of Heaven gazèd down;  
And in the light of such forbidding looks,  
The ruffian hands forgot their ruffian ways,  
And did but gently touch her pillowed head.

Night-weary care at last locked up their souls,  
And leaden slumbers pressed upon their lids;—  
They slept—and in the silence Zön awoke!  
'Father' she cried, but no voice replied 'Zön!'  
'God' she cried, and the echo died alone!—

Alone—along the lonely desert sea!  
How came she thus?—and who were these? and he!  
Whose huge heart-heavings rose and fell in sleep  
Like restless dream-oppressèd slumberer!  
With hands and eyes and heart to God upheld,



Zön rose above her dark mysterious lot  
Into this light wherein ye Spirits stand ;  
Whilst far below, the sea's unheeded moan  
Lulled the hard sleepers, cradled on the deep :  
But she was rapt into the bosom-home  
Of Mercy—God's own orphan-comforter ;  
And in the royal ear thus fondly sighed :—  
' God ! come—come closer to my soul ! Oh, come !  
And tell me—is it well with him ? and why  
Thy waves against us thundered ? Wert Thou there  
O God ? and when he grasped me by the hand,  
Did'st strike our grasp asunder with Thy bolt ?—  
Oh comfort me—and say he's yet alive !—  
Or if he sleeps down in Thine own blue sea,  
Oh let him be enshrouded quick with pearls !  
As I would o'er his home-found grave have strewn  
The flowers of Thy spring, and garnered him  
From wintry snows beneath a bed of moss !  
But comfort me ! and tell me why Thou art  
So high above me in Thy thoughts and ways ?'  
And Mercy whispered ' Zön ! he only sleeps !'  
For to her arms, and hid within her folds,  
His spirit, trembling heavenwards from the sea,

Had come, and at her warm heart shivering stood  
To warm itself, e'en while the rescued one  
Glowed at the self-same fire, and talked of him.

Zön prayed unutterable prayers, and she  
Was comforted. Thus sunward drifted they  
To meet the rosy dawn ; but she saw not  
The glory-heraldings that robbed the sea  
With golden light, e'en to the snowy fringe  
That rustled on the pebbles of the shore.  
Her eyes were wondering at the sleepers' eyes,—  
If, thro' the veil of night grim horror gazed  
From out those sleep-encumbered eyes,—  
How deadly, when the coming day should lift  
Such coffin-lids ! At last, at ruddy morn,  
They woke by one and one ; poor Zön had crouched  
Like timid child, and waited for the light ;  
They roused them Godlessly from out their lairs,  
And greeted Godlessly the sacred dawn ;  
But one, the giant demon of the crew,  
When he would lift his heavy thoughts to lip,  
And make his fellow spirits curse his power,  
Fell back upon his bed, God-stricken, dumb ;  
For fever's fiery hand had dropped a coal

Into his blood, and made it boil about  
The dizzy brain ;—Heaven's darts fell thick  
around ;—  
His arms were blasted like a stricken branch ;  
His bow unstrung ; the sky above him black ;  
The heart within him stone ; and there he lay,  
And grew oblivious in the gaze of love—  
Of woman's love ;—a relish for his soul—  
If the parch'd life could but have tasted it :  
For never had a woman's eye been fixed  
With tenderness on his, since he drank strength  
From out his mother's breast. Zön loved the fallen,  
The stricken, and the sorrowful,—loved him,  
And pitied his unsistered wants and woes :—  
Against the biting wind protected him ;—  
Smoothed the pain-furrowed brow ; and o'er his cheek  
Fanned the soft summer-breeze of tenderness,  
That hovered o'er the gushings of her heart.  
All day she watched ; and when the comrades stood  
In listless stare upon the sea, she talked  
Of God's offended truth, and power to strike ;  
And when they slept she wearied not, but told  
The tale of mercy longing to be won,—

Of heavens ripe with blessedness,—of souls  
That, rushing to the precipice, had leaped  
The everlasting gulf, and fainting fallen  
Into an angel's arms on yonder side.  
Thro' many days and many nights she watched,  
Until the wide life narrowed to a pulse ;  
And, in the calmest night that ever slept  
Upon the bosom of a sea, the pirate died.  
The spirit faintly whispered as it passed  
' God—Woman,'—then it passed away.  
She roused the sleepers, in that dead still night,  
To come and gaze at death ; one paled to snow,  
And one was blood-fired to the cheeks with awe.  
As childhood weeps o'er some fond panting bird,  
To see the tiny life steal thro' their hands,  
So wept they burning drops of manly grief.  
The sun arose in gladness, and the morn  
Walked o'er the sea, like a beautiful bride  
Walking among her jewels ; and music rose  
And fell, like the voice of a mighty realm,  
That rises in crescendo to mid-air  
And canopies a kingdom, sabbath-lulled,—  
Then bears its many-peopled burden up

Among the stars, while yet the murmurs long  
Will linger o'er the land. Soft siren songs,  
Thro' all that day, were heard around the dead ;  
And the dead looked up as if rest had come  
To its weary life at last, for a smile  
Was round the lips and would not pass away.

The long receding wave at eventide  
Withdrew into the calm and coral deeps ;  
And Zön beheld him glide adown the path  
Untrodden, dark, to wait the blessed morn ;—  
There, in a grave of pearls, he lies alone.

The lawless pirates of the lawless sea  
Now turned to look on Zön ; their woe-wrung fears  
Had dried the fountain of their tears ; their necks  
The load of death had cast.—Harder than rocks !—  
And ruder than the winds,—passionate and cruel !—  
And miserably lone in soul,—as they  
With whom the monitors of God had left  
A last monition ! Round her robed the light  
Of woman-glory unapproachable ;  
While every pulse bore back into her heart  
A prophecy of peace.

Again the night

O'erspread the sky, and chaos in the heavens  
Presaged the tempest yet to come ;—a hand  
Unseen led on the bark to dangerous shores ;  
And, weary with the struggle, they were driven  
Upon a treacherous rock, amid the shouts  
Of winds and buffetings of breakers.—  
They to the savage island leapt for life !—  
She to the savage sea for Mercy looked !  
And Mercy came in chariot of light,  
Drawn by the storm-steeds, and yoked to the winds.—  
From far she came, as 'twere a summer cloud  
Uprising from the sea, like a man's hand,  
Until her glory tipped the lifted waves,  
That, leaping joyous, marched behind their queen,—  
Like torch procession, dancing with delight.  
Her charioteer was woman-hearted Faith :  
She reined the restless coursers back, and sprang,  
Light-footed as a bird—just touched the spray—  
And, poised without a quiver, stood to leash  
The drifting boat to Mercy's car ; one word,  
One hope, and only one, for trustful Zön,  
“ Be still ! ” And away o'er the bounding waves—

Away, away ! where the stone-cold Atlas dwells,  
His feet upon the deep foundations fixed,—  
His rugged heart, storm-bitten, hard and bare,—  
His high head hallowed with unyielding snows :—  
Away, where Ocean's mighty pulse keeps time  
With God's majestic footsteps round the world :—  
Away, where things of beauty come at night  
To gaze up at the stars ; and things of power  
Arise from out the banquet-halls below,  
To wrestle for a spray-bespangled crown !—  
Away, like a herald before the dawn,  
To the rocks of Columbian majesty !—  
The cradle of the new-born giant race,  
Where cataracts lull dreams of infancy,  
And lives are torrent-flooded as their hills ;  
Where lakes and rivers, mountains and ravines,  
Call night and day on men to be as they.  
But a terrible cry came off the land,  
As sweeping by the coast, a million slaves  
Reached out their iron-branded hands to touch  
The royal robes !—but they must wait awhile,  
And bear the load and scourge and taunt and pang ;—  
Then, O my God ! Thyself go down in power,

And strike the fetters off, and let the men  
Go free ; they are Thy youngest-born, and yearn  
To taste at will the pleasures of Thy earth !  
Faith gazing through their un-illuminated night,  
Saw coming o'er the land a glimmering light ;  
But Mercy felt the greatness of their woe,  
When virtue, as she passed, went out of her.  
And then her chariot wheels dragged heavily,  
For she would leave the melancholy maid  
In charge of ministering winds and waves,  
And come up to the Throne to plead for these.

Then with the morning came the favouring gale,  
And up the ruddy road of light were flashed,  
Out of the sea into the sun—the steeds,  
The fiery chariot, charioteer and Queen !—

And onwards drifted Zön, still gazing up,  
If haply some winged comforter may come ;  
None came, or none she saw, tho' all the day,  
And thro' the watchful night she waiting watched,  
And fed the living lamp within the soul.  
She drifted on, asking the waves by day,  
To tell her whence they came ; but they went by  
In silent pride, nor told their cause nor end.



By night she'd spell the lettered skies all o'er,  
And tried, as human hearts have ever tried,  
To make the mute stars prophecy to them  
When'er the living oracle was dumb.

But wherefore shall I weary you with woes ?  
If this and this tenfold befalls one lot,  
What will ye think of generations born  
Inheritors of woe-begetting woes !  
It fell to Zön, when nights and days had gone,—  
And at her wasted cruise of oil sometimes  
A haggard hand would point derisively—  
It fell to Zön that, waking with the dawn,  
Her bark had drifted to a friendly shore,—  
Where stood two ancient weather-beaten rocks,  
Like giants side by side, daring the sea,  
That fretted up the pebbly beach between.—  
There in a sheltered whisper-haunting nook,  
An honest fisherman was mending nets,—  
Widowed he was, and child-reft too,—and there  
He sat at early morn and eventide  
Weaving wonderful meshes, while his soul  
Interpreted the voices of the sea ;  
And fondly called the playful waves by name,

And gazèd upon them till they lived and laughed  
And gambolled at his feet,—his children they !  
And there in the silence of sorrow came  
An answer to his longings, that a hand  
May yet be sent to smooth his last repose,  
And lay him in a grave between the rocks,  
Among the pebbles of the murmuring sea.—  
An angel to his eyes and heart was Zön ;—  
And long I may detain your wondering ears  
With songs he sung in honor of God's gift ;—  
For o'er their pleasant lives there ever played  
Sweet songs of tuneful tenderness ;  
As breezes playing o'er a field of myrrh  
Are myrrh-ful sweet. He took her to his home,  
And she became the daughter he had lost ;  
She took him to her heart, and he was there  
What *he* had been who slept a wave-wrapt sleep :—  
What music is in old cathedral domes,—  
What light is to the morn-awakened earth,—  
What laughter is in childhood's sunny days,—  
What life is, underswelling everything,  
And bursting forth into a joyous spring.  
'Twas thus his spirit, like a glory, dwelt

In hers and she in him. Three summers passed,  
The time of minstrel-birds and love-tongued flowers,  
When he, the good old fisherman, and Zön  
Oft wandered on the dizzy heights, and talked,—  
He of the strange sea memory-haunted shells,  
And she of all the silent prophecies  
That linger in the bosom of a flower;—  
He of the deep and dark mysterious past,  
She of the future, hopeful, bright, and glad;—  
He of himself, and she of none but God.  
Sometimes a voice would come to her in sleep,  
And he that bare the message run like light,  
From the crypt to the fane of her rapt soul,  
Calling her away to other lands;—but  
Where! where, could she find better rest than this?  
This her ark, and yonder the watery waste,  
And she, the dove that could not find a leaf  
To symbolize repose, reposéd here!  
And here she would abide until the waves  
Came up to kiss the old man's pebbly grave.  
At last, when yet another wintry wind  
Had swept o'er land and sea, they bare him down  
To meet the rising tide; and laid him where

He waits for yon archangel—waits in sleep.

An empty home soon cradled other hearts  
Unloved—unloving hearts ; and Zön went out  
One cold uncharitable night, and cried  
To the winds, and the waves and rocks, to look  
Upon their sister, buffeted of God !  
A poor shorn lamb shivering upon the hills !  
And doomed to stray, and bleat, the live-long night !  
Soon tamed by poverty, she'd ask an alms  
Of outcast beggars—yea, and weep for *them* !  
Until the vision came that bade her sail  
The deep again, and search for him 'mong men  
Whose spirit felt unutterable wants.  
'Twas mine she found, and at my feet cast down  
The burning off'ring of a precious heart."

Philetos paused, and still with hands upraised,  
Stood like a seer whose soul was yet a-wing  
Among the far-away eternities of God.  
Scarce echoed was the rapt and passioned strain,  
When One on high, most glorious to behold,  
Poised on a waveless wing, with trumpet shout,  
Proclaimed angelic sympathy with man ;

And bade the fair assembly separate ;—  
Some to the grateful river-fount of life,  
Some to the vales of meditative rest,  
And all to such divine vicissitudes,  
Wherein immortal spirits find repose.  
Chief-Angels joyous led Philetos forth,  
Amid harmonious shouts and waving palms,  
And at a kingly banquet spake his fame,  
Until he felt that he was deeply stirred  
To tell the tale of CONFLICT yet untold.

END OF BOOK II.

# BOOK III.

## CONFLICT.



“If we look into the Saviour’s heart we shall see how a *yes* and a *no* are in conflict there: the *no* is human, and the *yes* divine.”

DR. THOLUCK’S *Light from the Cross.*



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## BOOK III.

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THE banquet o'er, wherein immortal souls  
Had feasted with deliciousness of joy,  
Philetos, nectar-flushed, ardent and bold,  
Swept the rapt lyre like a prophet-bard,  
And sung, as in parenthesis, of earth ;—  
Her storied memories and deep despairs ;—  
Her beautiful creations wrecked and fallen ;—  
Her sons and daughters of affliction ;—  
How a man can suffer, yea, and how much ;—  
How much of happiness his tiny heart  
Can bear ;—his nights and days,—his love and lore,—  
His agonies, and energies, and faith,  
And all that angels love to look into.  
Around him showered their plaudits, and around  
The gathering wings like snow-flakes filled the sky ;

They thickened, as the nightly hosts of stars,  
Until the trumpet's voice again recalled  
The obedient myriads to the sapphire throne,  
Whereto Philetos went, and he and all  
Thrice bowed their crowned heads adoringly,  
And worshipped Him that sat thereon.  
Then stood the man-born minstrel, kindling up  
From heart to lip, and thus renewed his song.

“Ye spirits ! Hail ! Hail ye that deign to bless  
My life-song with your presence ;—still of woe  
And want, and banishment, and tears, I sing.  
Ye saw the heart that loved me at my feet,  
I took it up all white with molten fire,  
And nursed it in my bosom, till the glow  
Shone through the solid fabric of my life,  
And dwelt in every stone from base to top.  
I spurned my spirit-guide—I clung to Zön,  
And dared the loss of all for her dear sake ;  
Till with the strong perversity of love,  
She bade me go into the world, and win  
My laurels for her sake ;—and then return  
To shame the men that understood me not.

It was a sun-forsaken dawn that rose  
That day, when up the mountain-side I went,  
With weights of lead upon my banished feet ;—  
The merry birds at waking sung not then ;  
The timid herds, that early rise to crop  
The dewy leaf, stood still while yet I passed,  
And gazed upon me as a stranger. There !—  
Down in the sleeping valley, where the elms  
And cypresses environed in their gloom  
The living and the dead, one knelt alone  
And prayed for me, but all was still besides.  
A thousand deaths for crime I could have met,  
And found a pride to make me brave,—but thus !  
To bear my hopes unknelt into a grave !—  
To see life shrivel like a burning scroll,  
And watch the lingering sparks die one by one !  
To go—not knowing whither, cast away  
By man—not beckoned out by God !—this woe  
Did throw me like a giant, and I fell,  
But clung unconquered, till I rose again,  
Strong in the strength her prayers had brought to  
me.  
And lo ! the blessed vale was clothed in light,

The minster wore a robe of priestly white,  
The yew trees waved, and voices seemed to say,—  
‘Go forth! and thou shalt come again another  
day!’

I walked alone that night beside the sea,  
And at my ear my soul came up to greet  
The boisterous music of the lashing waves,  
And baffled pebbles hissing down the shore.  
The white sea-foam, that like a serpent twined  
The neck of night, shone like a string of pearls,  
Reft in the wanton revelry of storms  
From Ocean’s green tiarra. Oh! the blast  
Shook the gay corals, and the shells, and weeds,  
And sea’s best bridal-jewels at my feet ;  
And to the lone sad sea, my lone sad soul  
Sang out a song, that mingled with the roar  
Of God’s artillery, and died away  
Half up the granite rocks.”

He paused, inclined  
To bring the echoes of it back again,

And bent his ear as listening to the strains ;  
While up the distant hills, and down the vales  
Of memory they flowed,—still nearer came,  
And nearer still. A seraph, close at hand,  
Read his unuttered longing for a harp,  
And to the manly bard gave up his own.  
An earthly theme upon a heavenly harp !  
And when Philetos swept the golden chords,  
And o'er the silence flung the ringing tones,  
Each harp-string murmured out its sympathy.  
And thus, what once he sung unto the sea :—

“ Sing ; O Sea ! Thy soft inimitable dirge  
Unto my soul,—Illimitable sea !  
Fit comforter art thou to comfort me.  
Sweet are thy whispers, sweet thy earnest moan,  
That winds its spirit-seeking way unto the home  
And centre of my woes, and prophecies  
Of free ungovernable waves and winds,  
And azure skies, and shores of golden sands.  
Hail ! mighty sea ! Emblem of God ! whose love  
Enfolds creation, as thy waves enwrap  
My native land,—with calm reposeful depths,  
Emblem of man ! with heaved and throbbing life !

Lash on, until thou weariest down to rest.  
In thee, as in all things of beauty, man can see  
Emblems of what he is, and longs to be ;  
Thy storms, as his, are but a surface-surge  
That dares the skies and mocks the human will,  
Till o'er them rise the whispered ' Peace be still.'  
O'er thy waters gently stealing, lo ! there came  
The land-joys pealing like a ring of bells ;—  
The bleating and the lowing of the flocks,  
That feed upon a thousand verdant hills ;—  
The murmur of contentment's undertone,  
That woos the spirit to a hymnal joy ;  
The pleasurable hum of far-off mirth,—  
The adoration and the song of life.  
O, Liberty ! my native land doth worship thee ;  
And yet she is not spirit-free,—not free  
To speak as doth the throbbing sea, the thought  
And love and anguish of its heart,—not free  
To stand, God-clothed, before the nations' eyes,—  
Not free to worship the divinity of things.  
Come, bear me away, ye waves, to a land  
Whose mountain breezes revel in a sky  
Of spirituous brightness,—over snows

And under stars. O sea, how like art thou  
Unto the palpitating vast above,  
Whose spirit-surges, from the being-deep,  
Around us roll. Let God arise, and lift  
The flood-gates, and the world shall be o'erwhelmed  
With things of life,—great souls, great thoughts,  
great men.

'Tis on thy crest, O sea, I long to ride  
And be as they, the worship of the world :  
Or, if it may be so, a sacrifice  
To nature's love,—the mad idolatry of love.  
I'll go and quest the mummied hearts of old,  
And learn what comforted their sorrows once.  
O sea, I would that I were old as thou,  
For thou hast heard *His* voice, and kissed *His* feet,  
Whom, though unseen, I love! Roll on, proud deep !  
I go to yonder side,—to pluck a crown  
From Mammon's brazen brow, and for *her* sake  
Do bid thee bear me back again to wear it."

Thus did he sing of Ocean's vexed renown,  
To Angels standing by the glassy sea.  
And as on shores, where first this song was sung,  
Were heard its echoes back from every rock,



So now in Heaven resounding plaudits rung,  
Commingling with the echoes and the song.

Then, stirred to live his travails o'er again,  
Philetos told how from his land he fled ;  
And when the white cliffs flung their latest kiss  
Along the swellings of the sea, he blessed  
A giant wave that passed his bark, that it  
Was rushing to the shore, and listened long  
If he might hear it break upon the rocks.  
Up went his love and stood a tip-toe where  
The pennant waved his last and fond farewell.  
This done he strains to look for other lands :  
As one who voyages a sea in dreams ;  
Or one who, closed around with night, doth grope  
Through whisper-haunted galleries to find  
The glimpses of the moon : strange fancies come  
To such a one, of brain-born majesties ;—  
Present, and past, and future subject-souls  
Hold carnival about his heart, until  
The potent dreamer conjures up a throne  
Whereon he sits—an idol or a king ;

The throne dissolves into a glory-cloud,  
And he ascends, a mystery to himself,  
And in the world above becomes a god.  
Thus, giant-thoughted, went Philetos forth  
To graduate in greatness—yea, to gaze  
Into the mystic mirror of all life;  
And as he gazed be likened in his soul.

But let the music of his lips declare,  
As there before the angels still he told,  
The travail of his spirit after rest.  
“I sought,” he said, “thethemountains, where the light  
Comes freshest from the fountains of the dawn,  
And where the ancient rivers learn the song  
That deepens as they widen to the sea;  
Where men grow large at heart and strong in arm,  
Yet tender-footed, on the sacred ground  
That bears the footprints of divinity.  
There dwelt upon the sunny Alpine hills  
A sacred brotherhood, o’erseers for God,  
A tribe of nature’s priests and prophet-bards.  
My constant feet ne’er wearied in the path  
That led o’er rugged crags and deep ravines,  
Until I reached their emblematic fort.

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Above the portal gazed for ever out  
A stone-cold steadfast eye that never slept ;  
And on, above a second gate of iron,  
A hand of granite, rugged, huge and clenched ;  
This passed, a wall of uncemented rocks  
Environed all besides ; and o'er the brow  
Of such a frowning arch as made men stoop  
Who entered there, a human heart was hewn  
With rough unchiselled truthfulness.  
The eye was Wisdom's figure, and the hand  
Was Power ; and the truthful heart was Love.  
A strange mysterious silence, as of death  
(Though death had never darkened memory there—  
'Twas said that when they'd perfected their souls,  
They went, God-rapt, triumphantly away,)  
Sat cold and calm on everything, and brought  
A feeling which of old I used to love,  
When round my boy-heart hovered all the gloom  
Of sanctified impressive minster-hours.  
A patriarchal man of snow-white age,  
Without a smile, first greeted my approach ;  
He sought the ground of my desire for rest,  
Stripped off my worldly garb, and passed me through

Strange bare-foot rites in blind obedience ;  
Taught me to read in symbols like a child ;  
And when the past was purged away with tears,  
And no stain left, and after many days,  
He bade me sit within my silent cell  
To chronicle my thoughts—to realise  
Myself upon the everlasting page,  
And day by day to register the ebb  
And flow of being in the spirit-deep.  
No sumptuous fare did nature ask or need ;  
The soul imperishable cried for food—  
Imperishable manna—angels' food.  
We gathered it in heaven-whispering dreams,  
And in the mystic passion-love of hearts—  
Hearts of the brave and blood-bought martyr-  
bands,  
Whose precious drops upon the page of life  
Would brighten—yea and seem to flow again ;—  
Till, as we gazed, our human love bled tears.  
No voice disturbed the meditative calm ;  
Save when in darksome dead of night, a bell  
Slow boomed a deep constraining call to come,  
And, in the sky-roofed inner-circle, meet,—

And bow adoringly, without a voice,  
Before the Great Unseen.

'Twas wondrous life,  
To see the conscious soul withdraw far back  
Into her hermit-cell, that she may watch  
The stir and din and war of her own realm.

At sunset and at sunrise all were free,  
To worship where each heart would quickest find  
His God. I ran like morning up and down  
The hills, until aweary, on a rock  
I've sat to rest, and angel-thoughts have come  
And ministered to me ; and up to God  
My soul has warbled all its music out ;  
And in the warmest beams of light have sunned  
The wings that were wet with the dews of night.  
There's no night here, and angels cannot tell  
The sweetness of the morning unto men.  
There in a cloudy vesture slept the world,  
And here the great ice-hearted mountains moved,  
Alive with fire, and yet were not consumed.—  
There, far away towards the dawn, a lake,  
As if uplifted from a long repose,

Awoke beneath the beauties of the morn,—  
Its bosom heaving like the earnest sea ;  
And here, a human spirit throbbing yearned  
To mingle with the God-hood all arround.  
Then came the strange and still small voices up,  
From nature's heart of mysteries, and roused  
The music of my soul ; as morn awakes  
The minstrelsy of earth, and calls the larks  
Into her presence, that their song may bear  
Back to the listening world her graciousness.  
Sweet hour of everlasting memory !  
To poet-souls the birth-time of great thoughts !  
To peasant hearts the hour of gratitude  
And calm dependent prayer ! to prophet-bards  
And children-bands the heraldings of day !  
To woods and streams—to flocks and herds, and  
all  
The free nobilities of earth, the time  
Of glad awakenings to life, to power,  
To beauty and to love. No sadness comes  
To any heart but man's in such an hour.  
For never, e'er I crossed the threshold here,  
Could I embrace a joy, unless 'twere clad

In sackcloth ; then I'd take the joy and mourn  
O'er *it*, as o'er a pleasant sorrow, long.

Sometimes the voice of God was heard abroad  
Among the mountain-tops, and as we ran  
To listen—lo ! the crashing avalanche  
Rushed thro' the rent and riven snow-peaks, hurled  
As God-struck planets are, in wrath away.

I saw upon a gladsome summer-day  
A merry company laugh up the paths  
That skirt the glacier'd hills ; by one and one  
They kept true music in their measured step :—  
A goodly company of blithesome hearts,  
That generously wished all men were blithe  
As they.—The foremost, halting in the march,  
Stooped down to pluck a mute and white-eyed flower,  
Much wond'ring that such beauty lived so high,  
Where men could never come to worship it ;—  
He stooping, let the measured steps go by,  
And followed, gazing eye to eye, and soul  
To soul, into the floweret's loveliness.—  
The goodly host went on, alive with joy,

Until a sad prophetic hush came down  
Upon them like a cloud,—they laughed no more!  
The arrow from the mighty bow had flown!—  
And the bolt by the red bare arm was thrown!—  
For the avalanche leaped from his tottering throne,—  
And bore them away to the land unknown :—  
And he that had stooped stood there alone—he alone.  
A minister of mercy he became  
In after-years, and gathered in to God  
A multitude of souls. 'Twas thus at night  
Each one would carry home such precious lore,  
And on the eternal page record the ways  
Of God Incarnate in the heart of man.  
In mighty thunderings amid the snows,—  
In voiceless tenderness among the flowers,—  
He walked ; at rising day 'twas He who tinged  
And tinted the fire-peaks with lustrous gold ;  
At falling night 'twas He who on her breast  
Reclined in stately robes of starry sheen.  
Oh ! for the mountains ! kissing the fair skies !  
Men ! to the mountains lift your weeping eyes :  
Ye that in shadows of their greatness walk !  
Let patience grave sure foot-holds in their rocks,



And on their cloudless peaks ye shall be crowned !  
Ye blessed ones, that live in perfect rest,  
Are exercised in nought but love ; but man,  
Skin-clad, bare-footed, born in the valley,  
Breasts the biting storm,—wandering day and night,  
Until he's clothed in righteousness and light.

An old and gold-clasped book, hid from the day  
Rests there in unfrequented coffer still,—  
Within it burning words, and burning tears,  
That in my mountain-struggles rose and fell.  
There let them rest,—the goal is reached ! and I  
Stand here to sing to you of victory !

Upon the hills I've seen the morning come,  
On silent tip-toe, stealing like a bride—  
Upon the slumbers of the dreaming world ;  
And when she lifted up the vail I saw  
The tide of being flood the great highways ;—  
Saw giants leap to arms and dash their souls  
A-fire, into a dark eternity !—  
Saw patient Truth do penance over thorns !  
Whilst Love did bear the Cross all up the hill !

Saw Virtue driven into the wilderness,  
Where devils came to tempt her ; this, awhile !  
Until the earnest expectation waits  
No longer, but shall leap unto the heaven  
And pluck salvation from yon tree of life.  
These were my morning visions sad and true ;  
So sad when Memory came to me sometimes,  
And, sitting by my side, we talked of friends,  
Whose old familiar voices seemed to ring  
With all the shouts and music of our youth ;  
When life's stream goldened in the glow of Heaven,  
And angel-hope was pilot of my soul.

And nightly visions came and went, for night  
Had too its raptures and its parables.  
Or when they came not I went forth to meet  
The speechless prophet-spirit on the hills.  
'Twas in the hush of desolation wrapt  
My soul went out beneath the quenchless stars,  
Awearry, faint, and broken, till I saw  
One running through the night across the world.  
A burning glaring torch was in his hand ;  
In one the torch, and in the other chains ;  
These clanked in horrid discord as he ran,

His fiery pantings, luminously black,  
Environed all the anguish of his brow;  
His feet were red with blood, his eyes with wrath,  
And when I heard the agonizing cries  
Of men down-trodden mingle with his shouts  
Of "Woe! Woe! Woe!" I knew 'twas Sin unbound.  
My spirit vowed eternal enmity;  
No more would I sit down and drink the wine,  
While men, my brothers, fought the bloody fight.  
Heroic fervours tingled to my ears—  
Sin to be unmasked and bound!—men redeemed!  
The fame and triumphs of "Salvator" rung  
Already in my conquering path. I rode  
Upon a war-horse proudly through the earth,  
And nations kissed my feet; and Sin was dragged  
Behind my servants' chariots, dead! dead!  
I can't forget that night, nor kill its thoughts.  
I glowed like Deity within the burning bush,—  
Then all my soul was fire, Heaven was its fuel.  
O God! the world looked pale as death that night,  
When in a weird ring of mysteries  
I stood alone, and laid my spirit bare—  
A gift to fame—new idol of my heart!

The Baal slept or walked among the stars.  
How then I swore to mount th' eternal hills  
On heads of kings, and be a Michael there  
Or Lucifer ! Still 'twas a weary dream.  
No more of Nature's ways of pleasantness,  
The music-breathing morn and silent nights,  
The freedom of her mountains, and the blush  
Upon her flowers. Oh ! but for Sin, I'd find  
A sweet asylum in old Nature's love ;  
Sin is humility, and she hath none ;  
She changeth not, and sin it resteth not ;  
Most unrepentant and most mighty she !  
And yet the siren did allure me oft,  
And oft I felt, when sinking by the way,  
The languidness of longing after rest.  
I'll paint her glories to your angel-eyes,  
That ye may know why men will worship her.  
Her stars were ever angel-eyes to me ;  
Great thoughts do thicken round her silent stars,  
As to the lark encaged, a tuft of grass  
Brings back the merry dawn of former days  
And all their upward minstrelsy ; e'en so  
My soul, imprisoned in the flesh, hath felt

The twinkle of a star to be the lamp  
High hung in my ancestral far-off home,  
Where many hearts and many eager eyes  
Lean out into the night most lovingly,  
Expecting my return ere break of day.  
And all her nights how good and grand ! such nights,  
As first o'er-canopied the infant earth,  
When Adam's clear adoring gaze shone back  
The brightness and benignity of God.  
And from the visions of the night I've waked,  
When morning's laugh went quivering through my  
soul,  
Like God's first fiat thro' the eternal void.  
I've seen the virgin Morn with coyish tread,  
Climb up the mountain side, and smile on flowers  
That greeted her with open eye, but kiss,  
Most amorously kiss, the loveliest  
While yet they slept, or seemed to sleep ; then leap  
With love of earth up to the mountain top,  
Dishevelled with her wanton play, and wake  
With a wild laugh ringing like a trumpet,  
Divinest minstrelsy that ever fed  
A soul that side the walls of Paradise.

A lingering Angel—earth-enamoured Morn !  
I loved the Morn, when to my boyish heart  
She brought me nought but light. I loved her more,  
When all her beams fell warm upon my soul.  
And even here these Heavens blush beneath  
The presence of her beauty. Say, O Earth,  
Why all thy flowers sleep, till Morning climbs  
Thy dewy slopes,—or feign, as children do ?—  
But that the maid may wake them with her kiss.  
The Night doth bring Heaven's message to the  
Morn ;

And Morning bears the tidings to the world ;  
And Man and every grateful life leaps forth  
Upon the fields with dances, and with song :  
And sends the lark, with breast o'er-stored  
With sweetest sounds, to ride the topmost wave  
That swells from out his sea of melody,  
And greet, o'er mountain-tops, the welcome Morn.

All this was worshipful and spake of God !  
But, ever and anon, there came the calm,—  
Impregnant of a tempest ;—He withdrew ;—  
And there, as on a meteor-path, went Sin !

Ere yet he came men trembled at the heart,  
As forest leaves anticipate a storm ;  
Strong arms grew weak, and ruddy cheeks were  
    blanched !

And women flocked together like a fold.  
Before him flying fear, behind him death !  
Thus like a conqueror he strided on ;  
And from his fiery brands fell burning sparks.—  
One thro' my triple armour burnt its way ;—  
'Twas heaven's dews that quenched it, seas could  
    not !

My savage torture quickened into power ;—  
I vowed revenge upon the torturer ;—  
And bade my eyelids shake the dews of sleep  
From off their drooping fringes, till I saw  
'The monster, headless, 'neath my conquering foot.  
Through days and nights I went companionless  
Upon his fire-lit tortuous path ; my sword  
Was close upon his shoulder, and my hand  
Already strung its eager powers up  
To grapple at his throat,—but o'er me came  
A mist that dazed my sight,—and he was gone !  
And when I asked the simple peasant-boy,

He said that nought of horror had he seen,  
Or passed that way ;— but one had fought unarmed,  
The elder of the village, with a form  
Of serpent-beauty yesternight ; and when  
The old man would have felled its crest of pride, '  
It seemed to wear a human face, and gaze  
With large and human eyes,—that he was weak  
As childhood, and the axe fell to the earth.—  
Some timid maiden-spirits flushed to tell,  
That whispers came to them upon the banks  
Of drowsy summer-time, when none was near.—  
And old men nursed their children's sons, and told  
The horrors of the grave-yard wrapped in night,—  
And noiseless wanderers as white as snow.—  
But nowhere could I find the mailèd fiend,  
In trim of war, wearing his proper guise.

At last, one evening-time, upon my ear,  
There came a plaintive cry,—“ Oh, pass not by,  
Good soldier, with a virgin sword,—but strike  
Here—here, into the heart that will not die.”  
'Twas from a wild and weary Israelite,  
Crouched down to rest beneath a juniper ;



He looked accursed of Heaven and of Earth ;  
The blessed light was stained that touched his face ;—  
And yet, from out his prophet-eyes, the fire  
Of expectation blazed above the scroll  
In which he read the ransom of his race.  
In ages past his skies had rung with song  
From Palestina's palaces and homes ;—  
And yet for ages past their kings uncrowned  
Had wailed beneath the lash and scorn of men.  
For fair Jerusalem, whose beauty dwelt  
With tenderness about His heart, whose smile  
Doth beautify Creation, He had wept ;  
And I have wept,—and this, her child, still wept.

The old man, sandelled—girdled—staved—cried  
out,

‘ Stay, Warrior, for the night, and I will tell  
A tale to shame thy Christian mysteries.’  
The night had cloaked us round, and with his hand  
Fast gripping mine, he tearful thus began :—  
‘ Oh that I were as in the days gone by,  
When all my children gambolled with my flocks ;  
With God's own glory-cloud above my tent.  
Our hallowed Law was Heaven's own utterance ;

The outer voice to guide the inner soul ;  
And in a calm surrender to the Lord,  
Who loves the seed of Abraham, was peace.  
His were the firstlings of my flocks and fruits,  
And He my meditation day and night.—  
But now the summer of my life is gone !  
And old and goodly songs, that once awoke  
My people for the morning sacrifice,  
Are heard no more ;—the very birds sing not !—  
The shouting of a heathen Christendom,  
On-coming to the slaughter of my race,  
Scared the fond doves that were housed in my trees,—  
Affrighted the lambs in their peaceful folds,—  
And with the blast of their artillery,  
Scattered the cloud of my covenant-God.  
We heard the noise of wings beat up the sky,  
And fell upon our faces to the dust :—  
The majesty of Mercy passed away,  
And in the groping darkness, o'er our land,  
Came Carnage,—hungry, wolfish, bloody War !  
We fled, and they pursued.— “ The Cross ! ” they  
cried,—  
A thousand glittering swords to pierce one heart !

A thousand dogs, with long and parchèd tongues  
Thirsting to lap one drop of Judah's blood !  
"The Cross !" they cried, and on the death-hounds  
came.—

We lay with bated breath within a cave,  
Until their echoes died away—far down.—  
Oh Lord ! the anguish of my memory  
Burns up all tears,—my soul is ice,—no tears !  
The feeble heart of her that mothered mine  
Stood still—*there*, in *that* cave ! my Rachel *there* !  
And in the soft red earth we buried her.  
She never ate the stranger's bitter bread,  
Nor drank at Marah's well, nor saw the lip  
Of Christian scorn curl as it uttered "*Jew* !"   
For seven sons had drank at her warm heart  
The life-blood of their sire's ; *one* was to be  
The glorious redeemer of our pride.  
Beneath the hallowed shelter of that hope  
I reared my tent, had angel visitants,  
And dreamed it was the cradle of a race  
Of giant-hearted men. But yelling War  
Strode like a monster in our happy land,  
And tore the cedars of our Lebanon

Up by the roots, and stripped our ivied homes.  
Six brethren, one in heart, bound round with love,—  
Six sons, new girded for the fight, went forth ;  
These feeble hands did buckle on their swords :—  
They went to be a sacrifice for home.  
Like six unbridled steeds they rushed abreast  
Into the fight ; but still the torrent rolled  
Towards us ; all the hills were crested waves,  
A-glitter with the sheen of restless spears.  
Night came—a cruel night for butchery !  
No stars would look upon't—'twas brands of  
fire,  
Not stars of light. The minstrelsy of Heaven  
Was dumb ;—the bones of our reposing sires  
Did move within their hollow sepulchres,  
Beneath the tread and tramp of war. We fled,  
And lay with bated breath within a cave  
Until the morning dawned,—then crept away  
With downcast look and stealthy guilty pace,  
As if the leprous blot had on us fall'n,  
And every tongue had hissed us from the land.  
In weariness we wandered to the shore ;  
I on my staff,—and they, my age's hope,

Entwined about each other like a vine.  
Isaac, like a stag upon the mountains,  
Light as a bird, bright as the morn ; and she,  
Rebekah, Rachel's child, our one ewe lamb.—  
But hark ! my memory wakes again the shouts  
That thrilled us then.—The hungry wolfish horde  
Came down upon the shore, and severed us.  
In sorrow and captivity, apart,  
They bore us to their ships, and o'er the sea,  
Until a land of summer-crownèd hills  
Arose, and like a dream of beauty lay  
In stillness on the waves. But lo ! the Cross  
Was on her mountains reared,—and in her vales,—  
And on her people's foreheads ; and the sons  
Of Judah washed the feet of Nazarenes.  
Yet fain would they have won my heart away,  
To weep for Him my sacred sires condemned.  
Were they the children of His kingdom, who  
Had hurled the burning brand of savage war  
Into our happy homes ? Was He my king  
Who had no throne to sit upon ? No sires  
With royal greatness in their veins ? No ! No !  
My simple tender-souled Rebekah loved

To hear the tale of Calvary ; the dews  
Of sorrow's night had softened all her heart ;  
She wept—I never could—at that One Name.  
And in an anguish indescribable,  
She came one night to tell me she had vowed  
Eternal love to Him of Nazareth.  
The firm foundations of my spirit shook,—  
The heavens blackened over me,—and I  
Fell from the pedestal of life—poor Jew !  
My voice was choked with woe,—I could not weep,  
But sighed unto God the Lord from out  
The deepening depths,—the floods went over me !  
Yet was there one hope left ;—that Benjamin  
My last—my best—would hold me up, and I  
Go down in peaceful sorrow to my grave.  
I sought him at a shrine he often knelt at,  
There would he love to trace the rugged lines  
Of beauty ere they left the crumbling stone.  
And there I found him rapt in worship, fixed,  
With eyes adoringly suffused in tears :  
Before him was the symbol of your creed,  
But dimly sketched,—a knee-worn Christian Cross,  
And on it, yet unrealized, the Man.—

No nails or spear that pierced the Nazarene  
Made anguish half so hard to bear as this ;  
My home in ruins, and a ruin here  
In this poor breast. My soul was like an oak  
All sered, bared, barked, and heaven-struck, whose  
leaves

Still withering hung, while every bush and blade  
Could smile itself to life. And now I turn  
To thee ! Jerusalem ! my land of rest !  
Thy everlasting covenants are sure,  
Or God hath never made the stars to shine,  
Or given to the fruitful earth His rains.  
Jerusalem shall live again and shine !  
She hath been scattered by a storm of wrath,  
Like autumn clouds ; but in the evening's calm  
She shall be reared into a temple, vast,  
God-tenanted, and world-gazed, walled in fire ;  
As after tempests sleep the weary winds  
Upon the bosom of enchanted eve,  
Soft-breathing on her couches in the west,  
Environed with the symbols of their spoil—  
Pellucid thrones—and trophies quaint and grand,—  
'Mid landscapes tinted with the light of dreams ;—

So shalt thou be the glory of the world—  
The home and bosom of our scattered race ;—  
And all the mines of miser-hearted earth,  
Shall be but widow-gifts, which faith and love  
Shall bring to fill thy children's Treasury.'

'Farewell,' the old man said, 'I walk  
Among my children's graves, and cannot rest  
Until I rest with them. Again, farewell.'

And, sorrow-strengthened, once again he leaned  
Midway upon his staff ; and, ere that dawn,  
Had set his face like one that could not die  
Ere he had reached the goal ;—then, let death come !

One told me in the morning that a voice  
That night had woke the village ears with plaints  
And wailings, so that all who heard him wailed ;  
As forest winds all sigh a long refrain,  
Like children of one household, when the old  
And storm-o'-ertopping oak bends to the blast :—  
So sighed the peasants, even in their sleep,



To hear the cry of one so tempest-tossed.  
But now the sandals are unloosed, and life  
Pushed from the throne and palace of the heart  
And, wrapt in death's most placid patient look,  
The Jew is waiting, in a cross-crowned grave,  
The ransom of his heaven-scattered race.

Thro' wild and wintry winds and summer sands  
I walked, foot-sore and travel-stained,—up hill  
And rugged mountain side,—by wandering streams—  
A wanderer ; my sword-blade rested not  
Within the scabbard, for my heart was up  
For ever plucking at the hilt, to strike  
At shade, or shape, or shadow in the night.  
As burns a warrior in the battle-mist  
To plunge his virgin sword into the breast  
Of dastard tyranny, and strikes, and strikes,  
At every foe : so fought I with the wrongs  
That prowl about the wilderness of life.  
Unblest, unwelcome mission ! unbaptized,  
To go baptizing through a faithless world,—  
Unarmed to stop the crowded breach of war,—  
A man to dam an ocean with his hand !

I've struck a thistle down that stopped my path,  
And straight the feathered seedlings flew across  
The world, and were in paths of other men  
As noisome thistles still. So monsters grew  
To thousand-headed ogres thus, in days  
When wrongs were unhoused giants wandering wild ;  
The days of fabled lore, when things, not words,  
Were emblems of unutterable thoughts.  
I tracked the foe e'en to the haunts of men :—  
I stood at nightfall on a river's brink,  
Which crept along below an old stone bridge,—  
A serpent black and deadly,—and the lamps  
Shone in the lustrous darkness of his skin ;  
And all the night, the long and shining snake  
Dragged on his slow interminable folds.  
Thus, deeply moving, silently flowed on  
The poisoned stream, o'er pestilential beds  
Of death-engendered slime, sucking the mire  
Into its breast, from mammon-glutted wharves,  
And foul distilleries of crime ;—old boats,  
That e'en the fabled Lethe would not own,  
Passed like funereal hearses to a grave,  
Voiceless and gloomy through the silent night ;

Save when a curse came staggering from the lips,  
That in the whirl of drunken frenzy kissed  
The ground ; and, round and round the fallen man,  
There danced in mockery the reeling world.  
While musing thus, full-thoughted, on the brink,  
I heard a plunge—a deep, far-reaching plunge ;  
As when a leaden grief drops from the skies  
Into a calm and untried life ; or when  
A prayer 's hurled back from heaven unheard  
And unaccepted, down into the heart  
That emptied all its hopes wherewith to wing  
The supplication ;—deep as this the plunge !  
A white face floated down the stream that night,—  
Two lily hands did wring out speechless prayers—  
For help ; but the lips were dumb as the grave,  
Sealed with a strong resolve to bear the pain  
And agony of death. I rent the sky  
With cries to see God's noblest work undone :  
And as the sea-ward river glided on,  
Bearing a living treasure heedlessly,  
I saw her sink without a murmur—there !  
In waters at whose fount when but a child  
With sky-blue eyes, she viewed her golden locks,

And laughed at her unflattered loveliness.  
Th' unwilling stream did loathe the dying maid,  
And, with a mighty sea-begotten throb,  
Did heave her fallen hands up to my grasp.  
I dragged her out before the stars and God,—  
Breathed o'er her tenderly, wrapped her in care,  
And knelt believingly, and sighed a prayer,  
For happy life to come and warm her breast  
Again, and sportive run thro' all her veins.  
At long and weary intervals a sob  
Would rise, and falling shake the shattered heart :—  
Until the blushing day dawned on the earth,  
And set the heaven-beseeching fanes on fire,—  
And touched the river with ten thousand tints,  
And decked the black uncomely citadel  
With morning's bridal jewelry,—and called  
The spirit up into those eyes again.—  
Oh ! how they flashed their meaning into mine,—  
She was unmothered and unsistered too,—  
Had come into the world to ease its woes  
With beauty and with love ;—and, like a saint,  
Had ministered unto the giant's wants  
Too tenderly ; until the Amnon-hand

Of passion-power took hold of her, and rent  
The seamless robe of womanhood in twain,—  
Drained the pure wine of life down to the dregs,—  
Then flung a shame-stained garment over her,  
And hated her exceedingly ! One leap  
Would hide it all, and quench the lamp of God,—  
Would drive the fiend from the burning brain,  
And pluck the sting from memory. Oh ! Christ !—  
That Angels here untried should have such rest,  
And human hearts there, tempted, find such woe !

The dumb-tongued river miser'd in his heart  
The secrets of that night, until it met  
The wild sea-chorus in the ravished deeps,  
And called upon the waters to arise,  
And, in the shock of tempest-crested waves,  
To send their cries of sorrow up to God.  
The old time-whitened city woke as wont  
From its unhallowed rest ; as when from fight  
A warrior steel-encased lies weary down,  
And sleeps, mail-coated still, and dreams of war,  
And grips his hands convulsively, and bites  
The lip, and breathes as if his foeman's foot  
Were on his throat :—so slept our Babylon.

From such repose the giant city woke,  
Whereon no soft refreshing dews had fallen,  
And with an iron scourge scared from their lairs  
His thousand tawny slaves; until the tramp  
Of iron-footed tyrants, and the clang  
Of labour's fetters, and the cry of want,  
Went up to curse the coming of the morn.  
Unlike the gladsome soul, that as a lark  
Doth every morning rise and twitter out its song  
Close to the gates of paradise, then dart  
Down like an arrow to its rural nest.  
The congregation of a million souls,  
Unsympathizing and discordant all,  
Made harsh, ungrateful dissonance.  
If heaven thundered, men could hear it not.  
Amid the furnace glare of cities, and the rites  
Of worshippers who cried to sleeping Baal,  
I feared to walk; but her whom I had saved  
I nursed to consciousness, and warmed her lips  
With heart-affection till they bloomed,  
And smiled with recollections of the past;—  
When yet among her garden's beauteous trees,  
The fruit of knowledge was untasted, yea,

And undesired. The sad, lack-lustre eyes,  
That had so oft been fired in passion's hour  
Of hot delirium, sent the blue of Heaven  
Back to one's gaze, unsullied as it fell.  
She called me her evangel, prophet, guide !  
And to the dark, sepulchral crypt within  
Admitted me, where none had gone before.  
In cold recesses side by side there lay  
The dusty skeletons of hopes long dead,  
And records of the vows which love's own hand  
Had registered, but still were unfulfilled ;  
And here and there upon the wall, foul marks  
Of blood and blood-bought victories ; but chief  
A heart impierced with arrows, bleeding still—  
To shew that ruddy tides still ebbed and flowed.  
And in my very presence, from the floor  
Of such a cell, a solitary flower  
Stood up to say how grateful was the light.  
Rude hands had never plucked it from the roots ;  
'Twas planted there by God, while yet the heart  
Was in its Maker's hands, and yet the breath  
Of heaven's fruitful blessing was upon't,  
As dew upon the spring-time's tender grass.

Unsandelled o'er the sacred, silent floor  
Of her lone soul I walked, burnt incense there,  
And offered sacrifice, and prayed and sung :—  
One song we sung so oft in unison,  
That I can hear it in the distant past :—  
Give me a gentle harp and I will bring  
The murmur of the music back, and sing :—

There is a calm unruffled silence  
In the ocean of the soul,—  
Down among the coral treasures  
Where the storm-waves never roll ;—  
Where no sea-king ever rideth,  
Where the reign of peace abideth,  
Where no darkness e'er divideth  
God the Maker and the soul.

There is a quiet ancient altar  
In the temple of the heart,  
Where the priest doth daily offer  
His own sacrifice apart ;—  
'Tis a bleeding life he bringeth,  
While the soul in sorrow singeth,  
And the silent temple ringeth  
With the music of the heart.

There is a sacred hour of midnight  
In the passion-time of life,  
When the hero-thoughts come homeward  
From the battle and the strife ;



And a lonely love-want yearneth,  
And the spirit-flame upburneth,  
And the worn one meekly turneth  
To the God that knows the life.

Oh, seek the silent calm unruffled,  
When the waves above thee go ;  
In the stormy realms of ocean  
Peace abideth far below.

Let no rude hands mar thine altar,  
Let thy life-song never falter ;  
Nurse the love-want, while it yearneth,  
And the spirit-flame that burneth ;—  
There is gladness in the yearning,  
There is rapture in the burning ;  
And the life that's priestly offered,  
And the gift that's humbly proffered  
Are accepted in the kingdom  
Whither thou dost go !

Thus was our music hallowed by her grief,  
And grief itself seem hallowed by our song.  
Until an incensed cloud-mist haloed all,  
And from the inner light a glory shone  
Throughout the graceful fabric of her life."  
Philetos paused, to shake from off his soul  
The burden of such lingering memories,  
And all the great assembly sighed as one :—  
'Twas Love that could not speak in aught but sighs.  
Then while the heart-strings trembled, he arose,  
And, in the potency of song again,

He brought the rapt and gazing angels down  
To walk with him awhile upon the earth.  
He led them into dark and dreary ways,  
Black nightshades, where the lonely poor cringe down,  
Ashamed that light should fall upon their eyes ;  
Where poverty doth nurse a precious jewel,  
And will not barter it for bread,—a pearl  
Worth more than many lives ! a life that death  
Itself cannot destroy ! He led them on  
From huts to palaces,—from kingly hearts  
To crownèd heads,—from glad contentment's mess  
Of labour-sweetened pottage, to the feast  
Of gold and brow-oppressing coronets.  
O'er *this* the smile of Heaven, humbly sought,  
Hovered like a dove ; o'er *that* no light,  
But from the flash of eyes at dead of night.  
He told them of the stricken folds that lie  
Housed from the utter pangs of poverty ;  
Where hard men's lips are tuned to gentleness ;  
Where virgin hands do trim the lamp of life  
So tenderly, that oft it lingering burns,  
And fades away, as if unwillingly.  
Nor men alone, but where the lisping lips

Learn how to cry out "Father," when the kiss  
Of kindness seals the fountain of their tears,  
And on their pain-beds wait they for His will.  
He said, from such a home where children lay,  
A Litany went nightly up to God ;  
And then with childish broken utterance  
He sang it to their listening angels thus :—

" *Father !* Creator ! Preserver ! God !  
Sceptred above us with Thy rod !  
Trembling children we cry to Thee ;  
Hear us out of the depths of the sea !  
Father, our Father, we're children of Thine ;  
Hear us when we cry !  
Jesus the Human ! Christ the Divine !  
Save us ere we die.

*Jesus* the Human ! Christ the Divine !  
Thou who hast drunk to the dregs of the wine,  
Red with the wrath of the Power that breaks  
Men that are hushed when His thunder shakes ;—  
Brother of Sorrow ! Victor of Sin !  
See the dew on us and take us in.  
Father, our Father, we're children of Thine ;  
Hear us when we cry !  
Jesus the Human ! Christ the Divine !  
Save us ere we die.

*Spirit* of Comfort ! Dove from the nest  
Warm in the heart of God ! Give us rest !  
Over us hover and lull us to sleep ;—  
Calmly subdue the rough waves of the deep !

Cradle us fondly where pain cannot come ;—  
Fallen on the threshold our lips are dumb,—  
Bodies all broken,—tear-fountains sealed,—  
Tender Physician ! we come to be healed.

Father, our Father, we're children of Thine ;

Hear us when we cry !

Jesus the Human ! Christ the Divine !

Save us ere we die.

Oh ! mighty Life-Giver that quickens the wine !

Be at our silent feast !

The sorrow is ours—the mercy is Thine,

To sprinkle the blood of our Priest.

Oh ! Christ ! all bruised and broken,

We've waited long for Thee ;

When will Thy word be spoken

To set our spirits free !

Father, our Father, we're children of Thine ;

Hear us when we cry !

Jesus the Human ! Christ the Divine !

Save us ere we die.

By Thy virgin birth and life of tears,

By the bloody sweat and piercing spears,

By the death that hallowed human biers,

Save us ere we die !

And dying, we'll rest in the waiting world,

Till the flag of Thy truce hath been unfurled,

And sin from his tottering throne be hurled,

And Thou be throned on high.

Till then, good Lord, we sigh for peace,

And long Thy rest to see,

Oh, let the pangs that wring us cease,

And take us up to Thee.

We pray not as the strong men pray,  
For strength to fight, but strength to bear ;  
We say not what the glad ones say :  
That blessings meet them everywhere.  
For now the world seems far away ;  
And yet we sometimes hear the din  
Of the voices that curse, and the voices that pray,  
As they seem to be trying to break away  
Through the night of their sin.  
Father, our Father, we're children of Thine ;  
Hear us when we cry !  
Jesus the Human ! Christ the Divine !  
Save us ere we die."

This ended, all the angels wondering stood,  
And still he led them on, not o'er the meads  
And by the quiet streams, where poet-souls,  
Aweary with the world, transport themselves  
In dreams ; not there ! nor where the silent woods,  
Allure the soul to meditative rest,—  
And breathless things are pregnant with the joys  
That man alone can utter.—Oh ! not there !  
But where the swarthy night keeps carnival,  
And foul delirious lust's at liberty ;—  
Where sin doth dam the passage to the homes  
Of cradled innocence, and madness pours  
The fiendish draught between the lips that cry

For living bread ;—where faith is all oppressed,—  
A dull red glimmer in the dingy dark ;—  
And hope is desperation, and the hand  
Of charity is empty, hard, and clinched.  
They heard the hungry toilers bless the night,  
And restless sufferers longing for the day.  
They saw the death-hounds gather for the hunt,  
And drive the timid herd of human hearts  
To loathsome hiding-places, where the light  
Was darker than the night. And as they poised  
In fancy o'er it all, a little star  
Shone upwards through the city's gloom—a light  
More hallowed than the ever-burning lamp  
That's haloed with the censor's cloudy folds ;—  
And as they neared it, such a voice was heard,  
As held them breathless till it ceased to sing.  
A patient woman sat at silent night  
Working like a slave, warbling like a lark,  
And with her busy hands kept joyous time  
Led by the music of her lips ; she sung  
To lull the fainting spirit of her sire,  
Who lay, beneath the Heaven of her song,  
As doth a field of corn at morning-time

Beneath the trill of matin minstrelsies,  
Ripe and ready for the reapers ;—so he lay.  
While angels listened at the lattice, she  
Heeding not the night-winds, sang him a song :—

“ Soul of sorrow ! list to me ! list to me !  
A child, an acorn, and a stream I'd be !  
A child with ready hands to pluck at flowers,  
To toss the hours away—the golden hours.  
To be for ever young as angels are ;—  
To be for ever shining like a star ;—  
To run o'er daisy-dappled fields, and bring  
Home to my father all the flowers of spring ;—  
To climb the ancient oaks where the acorns grow,  
And plant them where the waters flow and flow.  
To be an acorn ! buried in the earth !  
And in the dark to bring unto the birth  
A forest, with a thousand beauties fired,—  
A home for wings that are message-tired.  
To spread a verdant tent o'er the lisp'ing stream,  
And give and take a glory from its gleam.  
To be a stream ! just murmuring from the mount,  
And mourning as it leaves its native fount ;  
Among the meadows,—down the solemn dells,  
Laughing like children, ringing like the bells !  
Under the giant oaks, on to the sea !  
The life of a river is the life for me !  
Sweet soul of sorrow ! hearest thou my song ?  
That tells thee of the stream that flows along  
Under the oak thou planted'st deep and strong ?  
I know thou knowest the meaning of my song.”

Thus did Philetos hold the listening skies

With the rapt music of a maiden's heart ;  
Till many voices cried aloud at once  
That in the kingdom she should wear the crown  
Of patient martyrdom. In fancy still  
He led them on to hear the bitter wail  
Of long o'er-wearied expectation ask  
For a Redeemer,—ask without a tear  
For one short moment's rest, that in the pause  
Of anguish they might tell the living why  
They longed to die. 'Twas thus in prison cells,  
And lazar houses, where the blessed day  
Is curtained out, and all the patient night  
A thousand sleepless eyes lie gazing up  
To wait the coming of the joyful dawn.  
'Twas thus where one-toned melancholy lay  
Adrift upon its tideless one-toned sea,—  
Adrift like a crew asleep in death,  
With night-winds howling thro' the riven sails,—  
Sleeping or dying, melancholy moaned.  
'Twas even thus where playful idiots laughed  
With meaningless merriment, and wise men sighed  
And burnt red torches through the live-long night  
On all their hills, so that the wandering soul



May find her lost way through the moonless dark.  
She never comes! but ever farther flies  
Back to her native home beyond the skies.

Philetos wearied not, and they who heard  
Tired not of human woes, tho' much he sung  
Of godly want sore set by godless waste,—  
Of soul-oppressing suffering and wrong,—  
Of womanhood and pain—manhood and sin,—  
Of godhead scared from god-deserted realms,—  
And last, of providences darkly hid,  
That seemed to say the Mighty One, who sat  
In everlasting calm upon His throne,  
Could see His creatures fall, and be not moved  
To lift them up. "One summer-eve," he said,  
"When all the world was wending home to rest,  
And long unbroken waves of hoary heads  
And honest hearts were ebbing back from toil,  
A fond expectant woman sat at ease,  
Watching the babe she nursed for his dear sake  
Who with the homeward living stream would flow  
To turn aside into quiescent deeps,  
Where faith and hope and love awaited him.—  
She watched and waited long, but wearied not,—

Until the tide became a ripple,—then  
She went half sad, half hopeful, slowly out,  
Telling to none her solemn silent fear.  
Her love out-spied her eyes, for in the gloom  
She inly felt his soul was nearing hers.  
Hold her back!—Say what frame is that out-  
stretched  
Upon men's shoulders—moving like a bier?  
Down from a sky-aspiring tower he'd fallen,  
Crushed like a worm!—Lo! he lifts his bloodstained  
hand,  
As he would point them where to find his home:—  
And from the wondering tearless multitude  
A woman's agony cried fiercely out—  
'That's my husband!'—Bear him away, poor soul!  
The ruddy tide ebbs from his heart apace;  
His soul is home-bound now;—thou and the child  
Must wait and weep a little longer—yet  
A little longer!"

Thus Philetos moved

The yearning spirits of the blessed world;  
And all seemed stirred as 'twere the troubled sea,  
Before a storm. When straight the trumpet-call

Gave signal of their king's desire that all  
Should gather round the well of life to drink  
It's coolness, and be calmed into repose.  
In grateful change, for change is rest when joy  
Doth medicine the soul, they sang His praise  
Until the calm of His own nature filled  
The wants of theirs. Responsive, everyone  
Reclined upon the bosom of such Love.  
Cherubs and seraphs, principalities  
And powers,—archangels, angels, martyrs, saints,—  
And hid themselves within the glory-folds  
That softly fall about the Blessed One.  
And e'en the rapt Philetos, newly-born  
Into the Heavenly life, unwearied still,  
Grew stronger as he sung, and strung his harp  
To strike a higher strain, that worthy, he  
Might sing the story of his soul in REST.

END OF BOOK III.

# BOOK IV.

## REST.

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"Nothing can rest in itself, except it go again into that unity, out of which it has proceeded."—Jacob Behm's *Mysterium Magnum*.

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"O rest in the Lord,  
Wait patiently for Him;  
And He will grant thee thy heart's desire."  
*Psalms of David.*



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## BOOK IV.

---

OH ! for the visions of the exile's home,  
To wake my dumb desires into a song !  
And while their glory wraps me like a robe,  
To bow my head beneath the one great voice,  
And hear the sky all full of messengers !  
Come, sweetest Minstrel-spirit, bring me wine,  
From Heaven's own fair and full-grown grapes  
    pressed out ;  
I'll drink thereof with prone and thirsty lips,  
If 'twere but from the hollow of thy hand,—  
My soul is so athirst. Come dwell with me  
In my poor cot, and by my wintry hearth  
Let us grow warm together, as old friends do ;  
There, while the world is cold and dark without,  
We'll glow amid the brightness of our joys ;—  
We'll sit among our own creations crowned



Like demi-gods ;—we'll call the spirits up,  
And make them tell in whispers what is done  
Behind the curtain and the veil of death :—  
And I who long have sung a tearful song,  
And told of strong desires to earth chained down,  
And never-ending conflicts full of blood,  
Will catch the accents of my hero's lips  
That quivered, as the pent-up thoughts arose,  
Longing to tell how he found rest at last.

Philetos thus, before the holy throng  
Of spirits reassembled round their Lord,  
He their centre, joy, love, life and all,  
Began, amid their breathless haste, his song : —  
“Ye kind and lovely souls, whose patient ears  
Have drawn my most unutterable thoughts  
Out of their secret hiding-place, have heard,  
And ere I sang it doubtless knew the joys  
To me of my untried desires,—the sweets  
Of yet untasted flowers,—and all the pride  
Of unachieved manhood ;—eager eyes  
Down gazing through the crystal depths of love,—  
An honest heart out-spreading like a rose,—  
Upreaching hands, and all-embracing loves,—

An eagle-wingèd will, with childhood's feet  
Of tottering uncertainty ;—with wants  
Too real for mummeries, and soul too great  
To stretch itself upon a hermit's floor.  
The doomed Tithonus never wearied more  
Of immortality than I, while yet  
My longings never could be satisfied.  
How oft would I, as he, have chosen life,—  
As some poor chirping insect in the grass,  
So I might find my world and wants agree !  
Ye know the end of this. I groped i' the dark  
To feel for God, and felt a softer hand  
That led me out into the light ;—they hissed,  
The wise men hissed at me that I had sought  
For deity and rest, and found instead  
A tender-hearted woman ; and they scorned  
My poor ambition, till they drove me out  
Upon the mountains ; and I worshipped Him  
Whom ye adore, in morning suns, and stars  
Of night, and flowers of spring, and wintry winds.  
Ye saw me lie upon a mossy bed,  
And on my locks the heavy night-dews fall  
With merry birds to carol in the dawn ;

While timid, dumb, man-fearing creatures came  
And gambolled round ;—I seemed a stricken mate  
To all of them, so sadly did they gaze  
At me, as if they would out-speak their pity.  
At night ye heard a cry above the storm,  
When lightnings rent the blackened sky in twain,  
And all these glorious Heavens flashed between :  
'Twas then my soul resolved to do or die,  
To win this blessed state,—how ignorant  
Of willing and of working ye know well.  
I hunted sin from all his lairs, o'er hills  
Where simple peasants lived, from villages  
And hermit-haunted woods, by warbling streams  
Clear-hearted as a child, and solemn deeps  
Dark-hearted as a man ; and in my love  
For my anointed Lord, now loved indeed,  
I won the scars of conflict, and was proud  
To wear a wreath, red with the wrath of war.  
Nights and days, and flowers and snows, came and  
went,  
And left the silvery traces on these locks.  
Years flowed in calm rock-wearing ceaselessness,  
O'er stately towers and kingly palaces ;

And e'en the city whitened like a fond  
And feeble patriarch, whose life had gone  
Into the pulses of the children's hearts,  
Climbing and clinging round the old man's knee.  
There had I watched the coming of the morn,  
As like a wealthy queen she strewed her way  
With jewell'd gifts, till from the old stone bridge,  
And down the stream, and up into the sun,  
There seemed to be a path of light, so pure,  
So bright, that blessed angels' feet have walked  
Upon it to and fro, ere men awoke,  
And brought me more than manna,—brought me peace.  
At morn, at noon-tide, and at shadowy eve  
I drank in life as flowers do the dew ;  
And to the eyes of others, as do they,  
Laid bare my poor expandings ; till a hand  
More rude than tender touched me ; and the heart  
Closed like the shy Mimosa—closed till light  
Dawned from sunnier eyes of milder souls,  
And opened it again. 'Twas ever so,  
The strength of tenderness was life to me ;  
But giant hands, stone-cold and hard, were death.  
The tender Lamb of God's own sacrifice,

Whom all these Heavens praise, I could have loved  
Until my bruised and broken heart stood still ;  
Because I saw Him as He had been slain.

Twas then my spirit plumed her silvery wings,  
Perched like a dove on sick men's pillows ; peace !—  
Peace ! the burden of her song ; and the leaf  
Of olive brought their flitting souls a pledge  
That when they winged themselves away they'd  
find

A spot of rest amid the watery waste.  
But yet whene'er my song went loudest up,  
Unhallowed hands would mar my ecstasy ;—  
And bear me blinded to the wilderness,—  
And toss me trembling on its midnight air,—  
And scare me out upon its solitude,  
That oft the silvery wings, pain-wearied, drooped ;—  
And lo ! I was no more a singing dove,  
But wingless desert-wanderer, who ran  
Into the shelter of the welcome rocks.  
Good guides soon led me back again, and I  
Put golden feathers on and sang my song.  
Poor dying souls went out of time enwrapped  
In tears and smiles, while I sat by and sang

Their thoughts asleep ; yet knew not half the joy  
That I had channelled down from God to them.  
Years came and went as do the daily tides,  
Bringing at every flow the mighty sea,  
The infinite and all-embracing flood,  
Closer to my feet. Out of those depths  
Thou hast delivered me, and brought me up  
Into the bosom of thy joy, O Lord !  
That I may give thine angels food for praise.  
The sons of Heaven's travail come from earth !  
The fire-purged blood-bought sons ! Creation's  
jewels !

I know of such an one, reared in the calm  
Of peasant God-confiding trust ; he sang  
Sweet songs ere yet his hand was strong enough  
To pen them down ; and sages wisely stroked  
The ringlets of the boy, and prophesied  
That he should stir the sluggish depths of life,  
Wherein the leprous world should wash the blotch  
And blur out of its soul, and then be clean.  
He plunged into the living tides, where men  
Go shouldering down to death,—where brothers sink  
With brothers' arms about them,—where the weak

Go quickly to their doom, and where the strong  
Perhaps may struggle to the shore. He toiled  
When others slept, for his song-time was night ;  
And though his heart was like a flowing fount  
By night and day up-murmuring ceaselessly,  
Yet all in vain the music of his tongue,  
Amid the crash of kingdoms, and the clang  
Of swords, and the ringing of the ravished gold  
Upon the stony consciences of men.  
Still sang he on, as one who by the sea  
Would crack the thundering clouds with loud acclaim,  
When o'er the snow-peaked waves he spies a wreck,  
That he may chance be heard whene'er the storm  
Would halt a second in its awful rage,—  
So sang he on ; so roared the heedless world.  
At last a messenger of mercy came  
To beckon him away to calmer shores ;  
But he was loath to leave the wintry world,  
And prayed the Lord of life to leave him yet  
A time wherein he might engrave his name  
Upon a rock for ever. And he brought  
From out the mint and mine of his rich heart,  
A poem writ in blood and set in tears,

And fastened it about the giant's neck,  
The grim time-wrinkled world. He dying said  
That when mankind had learnt his song by heart  
The blessed feet of Him they crucified  
Should walk again among them. Be it so !  
The world awaits Thy coming, God ! and groans  
In pain to be delivered even now.  
Thy sons, Thy poet-spirits, live as Thou  
Within their unconsuming fires up high  
Around Thy throne ; and they would bring all worlds,  
All men, all devils, back to love and Thee.  
I heard the last prophetic whisper fall  
From his lone lips, whom men had counted mad ;  
'Twas thus :—' Go tell the world I was not mad,  
But loved it to the last, for pity's sake ;  
And if in other worlds still pity lives,  
I'll love it still. But thou, my friend, beware !  
Keep the great giant under both thy feet ;  
And cling thyself, like ivy, to the cross ;  
So shall the world be thy disciple—  
So shall thou be Christ's !' Then he fell on sleep,  
And wrapt in death's most balmy slumbers went  
Out on a path of light in Mercy's arms.



I stood upon the rugged cliff of time,  
And saw the glittering sail of his white soul  
Upon the sea, just dipping like a star  
Into the light of calm eternity.  
And in my lonely wanderings on earth,  
I often heard his whisper in the winds ;  
And saw his beauty mirrored in the brook ;  
And felt his touch upon my arm, when night  
Had curtained out the bright propitious Heavens :—  
But he is high in state in yonder realm  
Of pure expectant spirits, where he sings  
A lay more hallowed, as the air he breathes  
Brings all the morning freshness of these skies  
Over the glassy sea, home to his heart.  
The old world knew him not, until the clouds  
Received him from their sight; then were they sad  
That he had gone away uncrowned, and wept  
Around his grave like lovers,—strewed the mound  
Of yet unverdured earth, the red dust-mound,  
With symbols of their grief, from death-struck trees,  
And old Cathedral walls,—the black sad yew,  
And ivy fond, and tender snow-drop born  
Of wintry earth. Thus men their penance do

For martyred spirits gone beyond their reach.  
'Twas such an one I knew, whose fiery words  
Shot out upon the front of every cloud,—  
'Cling to the Cross!' and on the jewelled breast  
Of priestly night, quiv'ring with living light,  
'Be Christ's disciple!' Then my spirit vowed  
To wend my weary way among the crowd of life,  
And o'er the western hill and western wave  
To roam once more in search of home. I dreamed  
How calm a grave a cradle would become!  
And to my faith's first nest, no more a child,  
But bending with the weight and snows of years,  
Stepped joyfully away. 'Twas morning-time;  
And staff in hand I made the western gate,  
And reached the hill, and turned unwittingly  
To see the giant city wake from sleep  
When morning shook the dew from off her wings.  
There in her robes she lay, queen of the land,  
While o'er her palaces there came a cry  
Into my ears,—a prophecy that cried,—  
And I took up the prophecy, and cried—  
'Beware! the blood of saints is on thy walls;  
And from the ground the voice of vengeance calls

For prophets slain, for teaching scorned, for thorns  
In good men's pillows planted, and the pride  
That tramples fair humility in dust.  
Behold the loud artillery of wrath  
Already knocks for entrance at thy gates ;  
And I can see on-coming hosts of spears,  
Like one wide sea of white advancing waves.  
The dawning of that morn shall be thy dread,  
And bring no gladness, and the night no rest.  
The hand of silence then shall press all lips,  
And hush the minstrelsy of heart and harp.  
Young men shall fade as with a blasting age ;  
And maidens languish in their prime.  
E'en love shall shun the lips it hung upon,  
And fly the leprous blight. Within thy courts  
Grim spectral visitants shall come at night,  
And nature's loathsome creeping brood by day.  
No form of higher life, save here and there  
Upon a broken pillar, or alone  
Upon a ruined housetop old men sit,  
Too lame to fly destruction, or too vile  
To quit the cradle of their native lusts.  
Repent ! O queen of cities ! while the sky

Is blue above thee,—ere the throne be set !  
And thou, Heaven-raised, be banished down to hell.  
But if thou wilt enjoy a covenant love,  
And follow in the footsteps of thy Lord,  
Then kings and queens shall kneel down in thy  
dust ;—  
Thy children shall come back to thee with songs ;  
And homely joys shall gather round thy hearths,  
Until thy fruit is ripe for heaven's feast,  
And thou shalt be the New Jerusalem.'

I heard no more, but o'er the hill went slow,  
With frequent gaze and fond, as one by one  
The stately domes and palaces went down ;  
And temple-towers and fanes and monuments  
Reluctantly withdrew into the past ;  
Though long they lingered in my fancy's eyes.  
Auspicious gales soon bare my bark away  
Above the dim and drowsy solitudes  
Of ocean caves and realms of coral hills ;  
While memory spent her nights and days alone  
Down-gazing in the sea, as if the depths  
Would give a revelation of the past,—

The dim and distant groves of early years.  
Hope went out o'er the waste, as 'twere a dove,  
To pluck assurance of approaching joy ;  
And tell me how the waves of fifty years  
Had fretted the white shore ; and at my ear  
Imagination whispered sweet conceits  
Of things unchangeable as God and love.  
I saw the snowy limit of the waves  
Pearly and white as ever, and the hut  
Whose warning lamp had glimmered with a hope  
To many sea-tossed hearts ; and where by day  
A lovely songstress carolled once the hours  
Away, by turns out-gazing o'er the sea,  
Or wandering 'mid the mazes of her soul.  
I saw her with the moonlight still at rest  
Upon her peaceful face ; and in the dim  
Night-hallowed past, my heart went softly down  
The aisles of memory, where still unchanged  
She stood, as if the magic of that hour  
Had fixed her there, a marble monument :—  
That hour amid the graves had been to me  
The ever-open, oft-repeating chink  
That lit the winding stairway of my life.

The smile of Zön had often met me there,  
And crimsoned e'en my darkest hour with light,  
While struggling upwards to this state of joy.  
Yet one low dirge mingled with all the sounds  
That came out of the past ; as if to say  
That Zön had been uptaken from my sight,  
To be a worshipper within the veil.

But there the minster stood, as cold and still  
As if the white years wrapped it like a robe—  
Calm as a mountain. Hills and dales were there,  
With all their worn and winding paths to shrines  
Where old loves lay ;—the same worn pilgrim steps  
Of rugged uniformity led down  
Into the valley ; and the very beasts  
That grazed the heather were the same to me.

'Twas eventide, and autumn's ruddy light  
Embrowned the earth with labour's gifts of gold ;—  
Fruits upon the boughs bending with their wealth,—  
Harvests waving in the fields,—the voice of toil  
Commissioned by the calm contented hearts  
To tell their joy to men, to God their thanks ;—  
The brook that babbled out its centuries

In one eternal cadence minor-keyed ;—  
The feathered tenants of the tower that flocked  
Back to their nests by ones and twos, like thoughts  
That good men summon home ere yet they sleep ;—  
The tender flowers that closed their solemn eyes  
And waited for the blessings of the dew ;—  
And over all the sacred minster threw  
Its shadow like a cloak ;—'twas eventide :—  
And as I walked beneath the buttresses  
I felt the hand of slippered silence touch  
My shoulder, and in such a hush I seemed  
A loud intruder ; then I hurried on,  
Down to the village oak, to grasp some hand  
Of trembling recognition, and to rest ;  
For I was weary, heart and foot alike.  
My tottering steps and pilgrim guise allured  
The wonder of the gazing peasant-groups ;  
And many children ran across my path  
To see the traveller quaint and silver-haired ;  
And village-sires just lifted up their eyes,  
Those earth-prone eyes, then dropped the heavy lids ;  
And while I sat beneath a glorious tree,  
Among whose boughs I climbed and carolled once,

---

The voices of the past made minstrelsy  
Among the leaves above my head. I heard  
The rustic laugh of jocund light-brained wit ;—  
I heard love's soft responsive whisper lisp  
Among the leaves, light-footed as a bird,  
As once I heard in summers long gone by ;—  
How did the tender spirits pour themselves  
From heart to lip, from lip to ear, then back  
Into the silent heart again, to hide  
From their own utterance ; as doth the soul  
Of some fond maiden hide beneath the blush  
Of her own beauty, startled with the sound  
Of her confessions,—stealing back unseen  
To its impenetrable fastnesses.  
I saw far off, adown the misty past,  
Heart-graved, a night of sweet memorial joy ;  
The moon was far above us, silver-bright,  
Sharp-edged with cold ;—the stars came not in hosts,  
But sent their crownèd leaders, for the night  
Was not for contest, but for tender truth ;—  
The winds were wintry, and the oak-leaves dry,  
Falling to the ground in utter helplessness ;  
We sat among the crisp and fallen leaves,



Enwrapped as one, revealing heart to heart,—  
Her face caught playful moonbeams should'ring  
through

The branches eagerly to kiss her cheeks ;  
Her tresses, black as night, neglected hung  
As sorrow left them ; for a grief had plucked  
Her coronet away, and withered up  
The garland that entwined them joyously.  
Poor soul ! she knew that I had breathed the air  
Of temples, and had waved the censor-bowl  
O'er hearts of penitence and bending heads ;—  
She knew but one Physician for a heart  
All bruised and broken,—yea and He unseen ;—  
She knew the friendly cover of the night,—  
Believed the tenderness of manly strength,—  
And came to lean upon my heart, and sip  
Sweet consolations from my willing lips :—  
But I was dumb, and felt afraid, as he  
Who walks with muffled steps where death is laid ;  
Her grief was too divine to wrestle with,  
And sat behind her eyes, within her soul,  
Like unapproachable divinity,  
Burning the dross of nature all away.

The finger of grief's silent angel pressed  
Upon my lips, lest I should mar His work,  
And dash the lovely fabric of her life  
Out of the Saviour's hands. In silence thus  
The worlds above us moved along,—and thus  
In silence moved God, in sorrow's steps  
Along the windings of her spirit, till  
He reached the sacred centre, and became  
The Guest and Glory of her being. Oh ! 'tis true  
That Grief's the clue that guides good angels' feet  
Along the labyrinths of human souls,  
With messages of love, and promises  
Of rest. We gazed into each other's eyes,  
Without a word to ripple the blest calm ;—  
And, in the stillness, felt upon us both  
The breath of Peace ;—a blessed night it was  
Of sweet memorial joys, whose music trills  
Upon the sacred present, as a breeze  
At summer time upon a willowed harp.

And thus I sat beneath the old oak tree,  
And, musing, saw the visions of my youth  
Come in from long and far off wanderings,

Like birds returning joyous to the elms,  
That rocked the cradle of their early loves,  
While lone winds sung a gentle lullaby,  
Where now the very ruins of their nests,  
Adorned with budding promises of spring,  
Allure them to a leafy love-warm rest.

The villagers came round me, eyes and ears  
And hearts wide open as a child's, and heard  
My converse with the creatures of my fancy,—  
Heard me whisper 'Mother,' heard me lisp 'Zön';  
They saw me grasp the air and hold it long  
In my embrace,—lift up unuttered prayers,  
And with my hungry eyes draw Heaven down :—  
They saw stern hate lock up my hand, and knot  
The manly muscles of old age, to strike  
At wrong and wrong's defenders;—then they wept  
To see my childhood come upon me like  
A shower and drench my soul with memory's tears,  
And pitied me till pity's voice awoke  
The silent dwellers in their hearts ; and Love  
E'en left her altar and her sacrifice  
To minister to me. 'There's one,' they cried,  
    ' that knows

The meaning of thy sorrow ;—Come with us !  
And thou shall see our fathers' father, white  
As snow, but blind as night ;—and if thou canst  
But climb up where his soul doth sun itself,  
Thou'll hear the voices of the blessed dead,  
And be above the stars thou weep'st at now ;—  
So good he is, and lives so near to God.  
So gird thee now, and we will bear thee up  
Upon our arms ; lean hard on us, thy sons.'

They led me strongly, tenderly away,  
Under the yew trees, silent as death,  
Under the elms where the moonbeams played,  
Leaping like fairy children, silver-winged ;—  
And under the frown of the minster grey,  
Where children never chased the merry hours,  
Nor moonbeams ever kissed the cheek of night,  
Nor careless insect chirped, nor flower grew,  
Nor aught but man and birds of night reposed.  
We passed the portals of the ancient dead,  
And o'er their cloistered vaults woke not a sound ;  
But up a foot-worn stony stairway went,  
One leading me along (for all the rest  
Had fallen aside by one and one, afraid

Of silence and of death), until we saw  
As 'twere a glowworm-glimmer far away :  
It was the ember-spark that never died,  
But day and night, for years on years, had burnt,  
The solace of the ancient man we sought.  
He stood as if out-gazing on the night,—  
As though an angel had come down and thrown  
The flood-gates of the soul wide open there,  
And poured a blessed sea of light upon him.  
With hands firm clenched and face upturned to God,  
And flowing robes of white (for he would bid  
The vergers thus attire him every night),  
He looked more like an angel than a man ;  
And stood thus always ready-robed for bliss :—  
And thus, in open converse with the skies,  
I saw him talking face to face with Him  
Whom sightless he beheld far off ;—he cried—  
' Tell me O Lord ! how long I have to stay  
Away from Thy embrace—the earth is cold  
About me, and I want a warmer clime ;  
I am oppressed with longings to be gone ;—  
So many spirits draw me silently,  
And wind around me bands I cannot break.

I see the children of my travail gathering flowers  
To weave immortal garlands for my brows ;  
I love them as they play among the trees  
Of their first paradise,—as once I loved  
When I, unworthy, gathered them for Thee.

\* \* \* \* \*

And now I see, beyond the children's Heaven,  
A sphere of love-embraced celestials,  
Midway they seem between mortality  
And immortality,—they live for love,  
As children live for joy, yet cannot sin ;  
They watch all erring men, and tenderly  
Uplift the fallèn and the sorrowful ;—  
And they constrain me with the cords of love.

\* \* \* \* \*

Beyond them yet I see a Heaven of light  
That like a fire-mist spheres all nether life,  
And baffles back the spirits of the hells.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now scarce my soul can keep within this flesh,  
So ready doth she stand within the gate,  
Of this poor body, waiting Thy command !  
My heart doth prophecy Thy near approach ;—

O Christ ! forgive my love's impatience—still  
The stormy winds—let me depart in peace !'  
And then in silence long he stood, and seemed  
To me more like an angel than a man,  
So calm he was, that e'en my whisper struck  
With rudeness on his ear and startled him.  
'Father,' I said, 'a village peasant led  
My slow uncertain footsteps here to-night,  
To hear thee solve the problems of thy life,  
And tell thee how unsolved are mine.'  
And, as I spake, his venerable face  
To me attentive turned ; I cried—

' Art thou—

And yet my judgment doth chastise my sense,  
The snowy years do melt and drop away,  
And thou dost seem to be—the sacred man  
Around whose feet my boyhood gambolled once ?—  
Who heard the lisping of the early wants  
I could not understand nor satisfy ?—  
Who drove me out, though thou didst love my soul  
As 'twere thy life ?—I was thine only love,  
Save Him whose name we never link with man's ;  
And yet thine anger banished me from hence,

To feed upon the stony world's highways,  
And sleep upon the thorny bed of care,  
And ride upon her tempests, like a straw  
Upon the sea.—Dost know Philetos, Sire?—  
Or doth the name of Zön unlock thy memory?  
My father —' 'Come,' the old man said, 'and let  
My tears rain down my blessing on thee, come—'  
And leaning on my neck the saintly sage  
Wept like a child; and every drop ran down  
Into my spirit, as the night dews fall  
Into a flower; and tears replied to tears.  
I told him all my life, and spoke of Zön;  
But his up-pointed fingers hushed my lips,  
For then I knew that she was gone. I felt  
As one who to a temple daily wends  
To seek the blessings of the mercy-throne,  
But finds the glory hath departed;—or,  
As one who halting at a well-known spot,  
Where stood an ancient cross beside a well,  
With thirst intense through hope of quenching it,  
Finds rude barbaric hands have broken down  
The sign of love and dammed the living stream;—  
So desolate I seemed,—yea as the home



Of Pindar left amid the wreck of Thebes.

The old man, leaning on his staff, sat down  
Beside the glowing embers and began ;—

‘ Come very near, and while the world’s asleep  
I’ll tell thee how the giant may be bound.

This hour my faith hath prophesied should come,  
And life’s full tide hath stayed its wonted ebb,  
Abiding thy return. When I have told

My message, then I shall have done my work ;  
And be uptaken like a child asleep.

If thou dost live to grave thy words in stone,  
And build a pyramid upon the waste,  
On every stone cut deep the name of Death,—

’Tis all I know of life—its germ and fruit—  
The cradle and the coffin of our joys.

Men say of Death that ’tis not God’s !

Why not ? ’tis nature’s ; and thro’ nature God’s !

Inexorable nature ! yet a slave

To Him the true and ever merciful.

A willing servant she, whose very breast

Ne’er heaves but in obedience to law ;

And in obedience, like her silent trees,

Finds dumb, and beautiful, and patient rest ;

And yet her service wearies her at last,  
Until oppressed with law she falls on sleep  
And dreams of liberty ; and while she sleeps  
The hand of law dams back the living flood,—  
And this is Death ! Hence grow great thoughts,  
As harvests grow, from out the rotten husks of life.  
Yet know that life is more than breath or blood ;—  
'Tis not the calm absorption of a star  
Into the blue of Heav'n ; thou dwell'st alone,  
And canst not merge thy glory in another's.  
Tis not the ecstasy that flies around  
The heart of Deity in upper worlds :  
Thou beat'st thy wings against a brazen sky  
Poor bird ! and flesh will weight thee down.  
'Tis not to sit beside the inner springs  
And drink in unadulterated thought,  
Spurning the goodly wines of sunny earth,  
And cursing all the rude material slaves  
That minister to thee. Such men would break  
God's marriage-bond between the heart and hand ;  
As if the body were a help not meet  
To wait upon the soul ; though sons of God  
In olden times looked down from grander heights

Upon the daughters of mankind, and saw  
That they were fair and loved them exceedingly.  
Oh ! be not proud of spirit-power ; these eyes  
That roll in vain to catch one blessed ray,  
Confess they grow weary not with light,  
But with a century's daily search for more.  
Your sky is black above me, starless, void  
And silent as a wilderness ; but there  
All ruddy, is the fair eternal dawn  
That shall not reach a noon, till all that is  
In heaven and earth and hell come back to  
God.

I need no wings of art to lift me there,—  
Nor hazy perfumed mists of symbol-realms  
To tone the hallowed sunbeams down to tints  
Of neutral softness 'ere they strike the heart,—  
Nor in my stony cell to make my flesh  
Do penance for the saving of my soul ;—  
Nor shrink confusedly behind my shame,  
As if omnipotence were glad to crush  
So poor a worshipper, for now I feel  
The presence of a God-head everywhere,  
In everything,—as if a tongue of flame

Did flicker over all created things ;—  
How oft have I, when life looked purposeless,  
Rushed to the precipice, sin-goaded on,  
To leap into a gulf, and quench the pain  
Of living far from God,—or find Him there,  
As burning martyrs find Him in their flames.  
No more such dreams. For musing o'er a book  
Long years ago, an eagle-wingèd thought  
Had taken up my soul among the fires  
Of far off suns and centres,—if, perchance,  
I might but glimpse the skirts of Deity,  
When He ascends the burning stairs of stars  
To sit upon His throne ; and lo ! a touch  
Brought down my plumèd fancy to the ground ;  
And at my ear a gentle whisper sat,  
And softly told me of my helplessness.  
As I have listened oft,' the old man said,  
'Unto a simple brook, until its song  
Grew into harmony ; and listening still  
It grew to thunders and to rolling storms ;  
So did the voice behind me, like a wind  
O'er summer gardens blowing fragrant fill,  
My needy spirit first with quietude ;

And then the voice grew God-like, till it rent  
My strongest hopes from top to base, and shook  
My fruitless faith to barren leaflessness.  
I heard within that moment what a life  
Had failed to tell me ; that the God I sought  
Was near me, even in my heart. I heard,  
And from the open book upon my knees  
It seemed to come, that human blood had warmed  
A living Christ, whom unbelief had shut  
Into the night, and would not rise from rest  
To let Him in. I heard that I might climb  
Upon the highest tower of sanctity,  
Amid the fumes of altars, and the cry  
Of men's hosannas, yet be far from God.  
The voice declared that at the door of Heaven  
Not e'en a babe's soft whisper spoke of me—  
Nor orphan-heart e'er came to pray for me—  
Nor widow's cry e'er sobbed my honour'd name,  
Nor ransomed spirit sung my praise—and yet  
The iron years were closing in like walls  
Around my life. I thought the sun, that beamed  
So beautiful upon my minster-floor,  
Would warm my growing wings with nearer light,

When I should pass his glory on my way  
To sunless realms. But lo! the lovely dream  
Drifted like an iceberg, wasting away  
Beneath the fiery touches of the light.  
Better I had lived unknown in village cot,  
Tending my honied flowers the live-long day,—  
With larks to load the lazy hours with song,  
And nightingales to lull my dreamless rest ;  
Or train th' obedient vine around my walls,  
Or put my willing shoulder to the yoke,  
Or wander with my careless flocks o'er hills  
And music-haunted valleys, where the streams,  
Like lovers, melt into one strong embrace.  
How happy thus to find my Heaven of rest  
Below the stars, and not to see above  
Another, and another unattained !  
My months would all be efflorescent May,  
And every morn lead in a sabbath day.  
But now, my pride was levelled to the ground.—  
I knew that I had groped and grovelled low  
Amid the thorn-grown windings of my life ;  
And, walking ever in the darkness there,  
Had never yet been quickened with the light ;

For in that hour the hand, which from the cloud  
Had come, was drawn mysteriously back,  
And I no-whither drifted. As a ship—  
Without a guide, storm-bound in unknown deeps,  
With crew impetuous and flag unfurled,  
And visionary cliffs that seem to rise,  
Tempting their hungry, eager, homeward eyes—  
Yet 'tis not home, but phantoms of the sea,  
Hope-created havens where their hearts would  
be—

Stands shivering in the breeze, as nowhere bound,—  
Embraces in her spreading arms the storm,—  
Strains every fibre like a thing in pain,  
And stiffens all her cords with strong resolve,  
Then rides with scornful pride upon the waves,  
And half in anger, half in jest, drives back  
The ruffian winds, and glides at last full-sail  
Triumphantly into the haven of her rest—  
So stood I, trembling, doubtful of my course ;—  
So drifted I ;—so may I reach the shore !  
My only hope was then that He would come  
Into the calm with me, and be my guest,  
And dwell with me through all my waiting days.

My night-time passed, and in the dawn I dreamt ;—  
A priestly man within a temple waved  
His cēnsor full of consecrated fires ;  
And contrite ones uplifted tearful eyes  
That haloed him with splendour like a God.  
He, proud with praises sounding like his own,  
Drew very near unto the burning bush,  
And all the people lifted up a shout  
Of adoration ; but the fire came forth  
And grasped his vestments in its strong red arm,  
And in a cloak of flame he cried to God,  
And God in mercy heard his piteous voice,  
And stayed the strong consumer, when the robes  
Were burnēd up, and not a modest rag  
Was left upon him, e'en for pity's sake.  
I felt as he, bared to the cruel storm,  
And naked as a winter-stricken oak.  
Then like the dew on grass, or light on flowers,  
A gentle, sweet, and beautiful constraint  
Came down upon my being—like the hand  
Of tender deified humanity—  
Or woman's hand upon a sick man's brow ;—  
And I was new-born,—gazed upon the sun



Without a veil between—heard music soft  
Go Heavenward continually from earth ;—  
Ran with a lightsome boyhood over hills  
And by the brooks; and clapped my hands with joy,  
And laughed with very ecstasy of bliss ;—  
The leprous spots, which tears had washed in vain  
Were ruddy with the morning-bloom of life ;—  
Hopes buried in the grave came forth unbound,  
The huge sepulchral stones were rolled away,  
And at the door of every tomb there stood  
The ghostly resident reclothed with light ;—  
The desert of my heart summered with flowers,  
And in the quiet garden of repose  
I walked, and heard at eve among the trees  
The voice of God. It spake of love and peace,  
Gave sweet forgiveness, and did gently chide  
My erring worship that so long had clung  
Around the cross, but had not lifted up  
Its eyes to Him who suffered bleeding there.

But now I weary you,' the old man said,  
' And will but say, how, kneeling at the cross,  
From summit of the God-crowned Calvary,  
I saw the riddle of the world unsolved !

Saw rippling rills to sounding oceans grow,  
And saw the hem of night's black garment tinged  
With the dawn of the bright millennial morn ;—  
Saw e'en the silken clue that wanders through  
The labyrinthine mazes of men's lives.—  
The mountains of the world were spots of light,  
And valleys were but shadows hid between :—  
The grand fulfilment of old prophecies,—  
The round completion of old purposes ;—  
The Temple of the Truth grew silently,  
While men, like workers in a gorgeous pile,  
Where nations are to be the worshippers,  
Saw not the full design ; but day by day,  
And stone on stone, the vast cathedral rose,  
Obedient to the plan and power of One.  
So all around that hill of love came on  
Unwittingly, submissive as the waves  
Beneath the moon, nearer and nearer still,  
To kiss the feet of Him their proper Lord.  
All living things without a murmur toiled  
Contentedly, because a whole world's want  
Did prophecy a day of rest. Oh, Christ !  
Creation groans and travails in her pain,

Footsore and weary, longing for that day !  
E'en so my soul once lost in the abyss  
Of God's infinity, found Him in Christ,  
More dear, more beautiful, more near to me.  
I've lived within His joy-life like a flower  
Beneath the smile of an Eternal dawn.  
And nearer to His heart I yet shall live ;  
My King shall be cup-bearer of my joy.

But life—Philetos—life—ebbs—now ;—come near,  
And let me knit my strength into one grasp,  
And give thee one monition more,—'tis this—  
Remember,—when I fain would shew the world  
The jewel I had found, my blessed sight—  
That had not served my Master faithfully,—  
Went with a flash of blasting light ; and I  
In blindness closer clung unto his skirt.  
So, when thou comest to a state of rest,  
Think not to float upon a lazy sea -  
With moon-lit fancies tripping through thy soul,—  
So calm as if thou wert at one with God,  
And blasphemously proud enough to think  
Thou dost Him honour by the union.  
Nor walk on earth as if thou wearest wings ;

Nor crawl as if thou wert a worthless worm :—  
Thou art midway between the lowest hell  
And highest Heaven, with tendency to fall,  
And power to rise ; but build as from a rock—  
Build up thy life into a temple vast,  
God-tenanted and beautiful and strong ;  
And let the light-reflecting pinnacles  
Rise up to Him like flames of sacrifice.  
Let His shechinah rest above thy gates ;—  
Let Memory with true and tender hand  
Bring exquisite memorials of the past,  
And in her quiet niches treasure them ;—  
Bid Gratitude, with burning censor full,  
Waive perfumed songs for incense, night and day ;—  
And let the ever-living lamp of Love  
Warm-tint the marble-beauties of the place ;  
Let all thy senses minister therein  
Like wakeful and obedient priests to Him.  
But draw a veil before the Holiest,—  
Thyself must have a life behind the veil,  
Where vulgar eyes see not the agony—  
The struggle of the naked heart,—nor point  
The finger at its poor anatomy.

Then in the after-time thou mayest sit  
Within the temple thou thyself hast reared,  
Between the feet of Him, the Beautiful,  
And gaze as I have done into His face,—  
So bright that all things ever afterwards  
Were haloed with its beauty.' Then he paused,—  
And leaning back, still grasping on my arm,  
His nature dropped away, like mellow fruit  
Into the lap of summer; and his soul  
Went with the echo of his latest word  
Among the stars. One strong convulsive grasp  
Wrung the two lives apart, then all was still.

The moon had swiftly fallen into the west,  
Like lark down-dropping from his songful toil  
Into his nest, grass-covered in a field  
Of golden corn. I, worn with watching, sank  
Beside the lovely, dumb, and haughty dead.  
You could have gazed on both oblivious,  
With the morning rays slant-tinting both our brows;  
On him light sat like summer on a rose;—  
On me all rippled like a restless sea.  
In dreams I tracked the way his spirit fled,  
And heard the greetings of the upper worlds,

And saw the wings among the sun-fires sweep,  
Gathering light, as bees do honey, till they dropped  
Beneath their wealth of glory in the sea.  
At last, irradiant as a new-born star,  
He plunged into the God-world ;—light with light  
Commingle like the orient waves at dawn.  
A cold touch woke my fancy, and I fell—  
Like a soaring singing lark arrow-pierced.  
There in the imperturbèd haughty calm  
And scorn of death, the spirit's ancient home  
Lay ruined by intensity of life ;—  
No longer fit for such a burning heart  
To throb and revel in. 'Twas harvest time,  
And o'er the yellow meads a gladness came  
From ringing scythes and labour's morning song.  
Of all God's world none seemed so sad as I—  
As I and death ! What wonder, and what fear  
Stood on the simple peasant-face that morn,  
When from the minster, every minute, boomed  
The throbbing of the melancholy bell !  
To all the wide and loving eyes that came  
And gazed—half fear, half hope—into our cell,  
I dumbly told the sorry story ;—there

•

He voiceless lay whose words had pierced us all—  
Whose lips had kissed the stricken ones to rest,  
And dropped sweet honey in the bitterest cup.  
We wept, and through our tearful eyes we saw  
Dim radiances round him, as in life.

'Twas on a calm autumnal eve a hush  
Came down upon us like a velvet pall ;  
And in the long and solemn shadows moved  
A long and slow procession,—heavy feet,  
And heavy hearts—sorrow-weighted to his grave.  
We stood like bending willows o'er a stream ;  
And when the earth dropped hard and cruel down  
Upon their sleeping sire, the people sighed  
As 'twere the sougling and the sighing woods ;  
And one by one, from age to infancy,  
Drew near with hidden face to look once more  
Upon their father, and to throw a flower  
Upon the quiet dust,—to prophecy  
That he should rise again as flowers do,—  
To symbolize their sweet undying love,  
And round his form to wrap a tender cloak,  
And keep the cold red clinging earth away.

I'll tell, ye residents of Paradise,  
Who never saw tears drop upon a flower,  
Or thought that men could love so frail a thing,  
How brooks and hills, highways and hedges sent  
Their tribute to the old man's memory.  
They brought the sweet and Heavenly amaranth  
That never dies,—blood-sprinkled florimors,—  
And everlasting-love, to pilgrims dear,—  
The flowers of the sun to tell of light  
Within the lone one's dreary sepulchre ;—  
They brought the drowsy poppy blushing red  
As if ashamed of such an idle ease  
Among the waving corn,—and blossoms bright  
That give the hawk her cruel cunning sight—  
And simple camomile that like man's heart  
Is mostly odorous when mostly bruised—  
And goulans gay that robe the ripe brown month  
In ruddy richness like a robe of gold,—  
And autumn may-weed low that lifts its head  
And smiles to see the sickle pass away,—  
And mignonette that spikes the hedgerows green  
With sunny fires—and virtuous Athanasias ;—  
And from the silent stream the reed-mace flower,



So sacred to the poor for His dear sake  
Who, man-mocked, bore it for His sceptre once ;—  
And from the sea the pimpernel and pink  
And rosy sea-bells ;—yea, and more than these,  
If memory would serve my wish to tell.  
When all had lingeringly gone away  
One came in tottering haste, a gleaner old  
And widowed, with an offering rich and rare—  
A handful of her gleanings threw she in,  
Nor lifted up her eyes, nor spake a word,  
But as she silent came she silent went,  
Bearing in her heart a world of silent love.

White wings that night were seen to rise and fall  
Upon the Heavenward paths of soft moonlight ;  
And some e'en heard strange music, like a storm  
That's far away triumphant in the woods,  
Singing its heart to rest. 'Twas love heard this !  
Believing, unbelieving, human love !  
That cannot let another die nor die herself—  
That clings e'en to the rose that pierces it—  
That plays e'en with the snake that fangs the heart—  
That hugs a grief until it kills the very love  
With which 'tis pregnant—thus they mourned for him.

But soon the bread of sorrow ashes seemed  
Within their thirsty lips ; and with one voice  
The orphan-people, desolate, bereaved,  
And broken-hearted, vowed that I should be  
Their comforter : and at my feet they poured  
Their simple offerings. Now rest had come !  
The bright prophetic longings of my life  
Found now fulfilment. No more mammon-toil  
For hard existence,—struggling with the gross,  
And herding with the vile for crumbs of bread ;  
And yet withal to bear within a heart  
Up-flaming, eager after God and Truth.  
Now back my mother's promises returned  
That in my soul should many souls have joy,—  
That suffering should sweeten into peace ;—  
And at the last that He, who leads all worlds  
And all creations like a willing flock,  
Should call me to be shepherd of a fold  
Of living, loving, humble, bleeding hearts.  
O God ! Thou tried'st me in furnaces,  
And from the fusion ran a stream of gold.  
At night we met and strove for mastery,—  
My soul,—the book,—my body and the fiend.

A weary struggle in a wilderness,  
Where angels waited to be ministers !  
And angels always came before the dawn ;—  
The enemy with darkness fled ; to sleep  
My body sank, and from the holy book  
A joy-light beamed as from the heart of God !  
Fire-hallowed thus at morning-time, and charged  
With love, fresh drawn from Love's own heart of  
    hearts,

I went among my people with a balm  
For sorrow, and a song for toil ; and put  
A tender hand between the galling yoke  
And man's bowed neck. My days were sweetened thro'  
With dews down dropping from the tree of life,  
Among whose leaves fluttered our winged desires.  
And Evening like an elder sister came  
Soft-footed by our couch, and with a kiss  
Sealed up the treasure-house of memory ;  
And bade the wings of angels curtain us  
In slumbers, and the songs of nightingales  
To lull us into sleep. We waked, and walked  
At peace with all the world ; and felt our hearts  
Yearn to embrace more worlds than God had made.

When spring-time brought the flowers we knew 'twas  
God

Down moving in the darkneses of earth ;—  
As shall be, when all things shall be surcharged  
With *Him* ; and nations sown corruptibly  
Shall bloom into a kingdom in an hour !  
We lay upon His lap in summer-woods,  
And spake with Him in cool and calm retreats.  
We ate His kingly autumn-gifts with joy ;  
And round the winter fires old memories  
Would sit and weave—and weave—and then unweave  
The warp and woof of life, to find the thread  
Of gold meandering there, as rivulets  
Through forests wander bright and silver-toned.  
'Ere this my soul had found no unison  
In life ; but sung its melancholy song  
Alone ; and like a lost world drifted on  
Seeking a sun to draw it into law,  
To share the glory and the gladness too  
Of some harmonious constellated group.  
The solemn order and the stately march  
Of other men, along the road of life,  
Did mock my down-fallen wounded nature so,

That I was hard at heart, and hard at lip  
When souls came round me with their simple faith,  
And clung about my feet like moaning waves  
About a rock ; until they cried for rest ;—  
Then did I pray thee, O Thou patient Christ !  
To wait unwearied all night long in thorns  
And darkness, wind and dews, till this great world  
Should open all its doors to let Thee in.  
And many hearts grew tender with Thy touch,  
And many lives grew very beautiful.

One giant heart, that scorned to wrestle men,  
Had struggled with his spirit-foes alone,  
And had strange mastery and strange defeat ;  
He tested all things in his crucible,  
And hung the trophies round his solitude ;—  
Would watch the strong contortions of his soul  
Unmoved, with greedy eyes, to catch a glimpse  
Of mystery in the throes of suffering.  
He hated all the common herd of men,  
Looked down on state nobility and pride,  
And found no brotherhood,—but tyranny.  
Yet through the night that cloaked his hermitage  
A beam of light fell on his weary brow ;

And when in pain he drank the kingdom's wine,  
And heard a soft voice say, 'Remember me!'  
His ardent being, leaping from the rock,  
Was borne upon the waves to yonder shore;  
I heard him singing far and far away,  
Till Heaven shut him in, 'My happy home.'

And there was one,—a beautiful stray lamb  
From out the upper fold,—a ray of light  
That shot across our sky, warm as the flush  
Of a new-created world;—she was a sea  
Of undisturbed repose that bosomed stars,  
And flowers, and Heavens, and God's own loveliness.  
We saw her play, child-hearted in the fields,  
And thought the wreath she twined about her brow  
An emblematic prophecy of her;—  
Too tender for the desert-breath of earth,  
And too divinely tinted to abide  
Untouched by rougher hands than summer winds.  
Her being leaned unto another's, warm,  
And love-o'erflowing as her own. (Such hearts  
Can never dwell alone; but, rooting deep  
Into the earth, their tendrils twine the rocks

And seek the streams—to live a double life.  
No solitary thing is beautiful ;—  
E'en God's eternity was cheerless, cold,  
And barren as a desolated hearth,  
Until His love out-yearned creation-ward.  
And she had much of God's large-heartedness,  
And to another gave her wealth of love.  
Bright were the hours that goldened all their prime ;  
Their Heaven was full of song-birds night and day ;  
The quiet rocks and whisper-haunted woods  
Were witness of their raptures ; and the moon,  
One night when all the earth was fast asleep,  
Unmoved beheld the ecstasies of fire  
That played like lightning round their heads ;  
The whirl and madness of two burning brains,—  
The rush of soul that crowded in that hour  
The old eternities,—the mighty joy  
That flung them back again, and would not give  
A kiss for all their wealth,—the oblivious pause,—  
And then night's black and outer namelessness ;—  
All this the silent moon looked down upon.  
And she, woe-veiled at heart, next morning walked,  
And many mornings, rising from unrest,

Walked solitary in the silent fields,  
Among the silent flowers ne'er lifting up  
Her shame-flushed eyes ; the light reproach'd her  
then,

But flowers in their trodden meekness bade  
Her fallen heart 'Lie low, and still look up.'  
Then warm and tender-footed as a breeze  
Of summer fragrance 'cross her path I stole,  
And spake the comfort of the Blessed One ;  
Until her sadness sweetened into rest ;  
Though even Heaven's dearest promises  
Could ne'er persuade her to give up her grief ;—  
She said it was the stairway to her God.  
And now while I am here o'ercharged with joy,  
Perchance she wanders love-oppressed and slow  
Beside the sea, or running brooks, or in the woods.

And we enlarged the borders of our love  
Unto the utmost poles, and sent a voice  
To speak for us amid the torrid fires  
And arctic snows ; the echoes of our songs  
Have trembled on the heart-strings of our sons,  
When sea-storms rolled between us, and they sat  
Outside their tents at cool of summer-eve,



Upon the grass, with faces homeward set.  
Our interceding cries have met with theirs  
Mid ocean and together gone to Heaven :  
Sweet-laden memories did wend their way  
From us up night's steep mountain to the stars  
And then go down to them on yonder side.  
'Tis thus that seas nor darkness, space nor time  
Could e'er divorce us from our faith's first-born.

And one there was among us whom we sent  
To lure the mother-city of our land  
With songs of native freshness, and to calm  
Her life-surchargèd heart, to sing to her  
Of rest, and let her fevered fancy walk  
Among the dewy meadows of repose,  
And cool her way-worn feet. She listened long  
And fondly to our village poet-boy.  
And gave him gold for songs, until he bowed  
Beneath the royal honours, and the wreath  
Was heavy on his brow ; and he came back  
All drooping, like a lark that had been caged.  
We set him free among his native groves,  
And there he sang to us all summer long.

They said he sang by day the very songs  
Which angels taught him in the night. Sweet  
soul !

The world had need of thee ! as it hath need  
Of rest in sleep, as it hath need of flowers.  
And mountain-cradled stillnesses, and lakes.  
He taught us that all life was but the throb  
Of underlying Deity ; and thus  
The world was full of voices and of eyes ;—  
That men stood midway on the mountain side  
Up which all life, through all eternity,  
Had struggled on to reach the glory-cloud  
That sat upon it. And *he* entered there ;  
And like a world on fire drew after him  
A burning retinue ;—our hearts and loves  
Went up entangled in his priestly robes.  
And when he hears your rapturous refrains,  
Encircling this most hallowed throne, he'll plunge  
Into its joy, like morning's first warm beam  
Into the sea. Your Hèavens were enriched,  
And earth impoverished, when he threw back  
The mantle, and it fell where no man stood :—  
It fell upon a calm melodious stream,

That ever since hath lisped in numbers clear,  
And carried all its music to the sea.

Thus lived and died as I have sung my people ;  
And the bread of rest was ministered to me  
In broken freshness from the salver of their lives.  
The sweetest recollection that still blooms  
Unfadingly, is of the silent hours  
Our souls did gather round the sabbath day,  
Like sacramental worshippers  
Around the altar kneeling,—with our lips  
The broken body tasting, and the cup  
Of poured-out blood-wine in our hands.  
And down the valleys, by the winding brooks,  
Through all the groves, and life-bespangled meads,  
And up the untrodden pathways of the sky,  
Went forth the music of our sabbath-bells ;  
And every note brought home a worshipper.  
The child of many days, whose simple heart  
Had bowed obediently beneath his lot,  
Was led confidingly by one small hand,  
That fitted now and then away from his  
To pluck a flower, while age looked down and smiled,

From his grey tower. The sturdy man of years  
Who never questioned what his sire believed,  
But lived familiar with old nature's ways,  
As with the flocks he tended, walked along  
Among his sheaves, and giving inly thanks  
That such a gift should crown his toil, thus  
mused,—

'Throw seed into the bosom of the spring,  
Believe, or disbelieve, and yet 'twill grow.'  
The power that had fulfilled the promises  
Of fourscore years, was not of earth to him,  
But God's incontrovertible desire,  
That pushes buds to fruit, acorns to oaks,  
The spring to harvest, and that giveth bread  
E'en to the stubborn children that rebel,  
So He might bring them back into His love—  
That highest reach of life. Your noblest chief  
That glads my presence with his light, and stands  
Upon the top of being, touching Him  
Who is the end of all, hath life in love ;  
And finding God, doth lose himself in Him.  
So is it with untutored peasant men,  
Whose best inheritance hath ever been

A calm acceptance of their fathers' faith ;  
That ancient faith that grew to sight and touch,  
When man from stony pillows dreamed of Heaven.  
They never feel the pangs that knowledge brings ;  
But launch themselves, as children do their ships,  
On unknown waters, and the world's amazed  
To see them safely reach the yonder side.

But more, our silver-sounding bells that flung  
Their messengers like spirits on the air,  
Brought in the snow-white virgin-hearted bands  
With lilies and with roses much adorned ;  
And, walking in their very footsteps, groups  
Of stalwart sons, admiringly alive  
To every word and wish ; but chiefly bent,  
Upon that hallowed day, to pay their dues  
To God, and in the minster's sanctity  
To glimpse the beauty of another world.  
Your greater joys know not such sweets as these,—  
The memories of human hearts a-perched  
And swinging on the topmost bough of bliss.  
Hill-sheltered was our home, where undisturbed  
The voices of our dead would linger long,  
Yet never pass away, but could be heard

Above the storm—above the chariot wheels,  
And boom and hiss of battle,—and the clang  
Of chains about the vanquished,—and the laugh  
Of bacchanals, and the sighing of the poor.  
These came to us like tidings of a world  
Far off ;—so peaceful were our silent hills.

But if your ears are yet unwearied, come  
Into the hush of solitude with me,  
And feel as I have felt, joy-thrilled and dumb.  
Some love to be a calm receiving lake,  
Distilling with persistent gentleness  
Down through the rocky world, and springing up  
A fountain in some far off wilderness,  
Where burning lips their lonely presence bless ;—  
Some love to lean upon a human breast,  
To lean and let the heart outpour itself  
In sweet appellatives, or nameless sighs.  
As on Thy bosom I have leaned, sweet Christ !  
Thou man-betrayed and silent Sufferer !  
Meek, hallowed, unconsumed Sacrifice !  
Great Promise of my spirit's present joy !  
Strong Bond of oneness round a broken world !

The earth's wide-souled Philanthropist !

Clear Mirror of reflected Deity !

All that of man I love !—of God I want !

Ye perfect ones can never feel the glow

That mantles all that heart which leans on Him.

There cease the longings, and bright visions come,

Where God's infinities do swallow us.

In Nature's night I've heard His sweet voice say,

' Arise, thou weary one, and drink ; ' and lo !

Beside my pillow sprang a clear glad stream !

And as I drank 'twas milk,—and drinking still

'Twas wine ; thus drew I life and tenderness

And strength from out the same thirst-quenching  
spring.

When I was dumb, with grief's hard hand sore  
pressed

Upon my mouth, He leaned down to my heart,

And understood the strong pulsations there ;

Then gave me strength to hope, then gave me  
words,

And they went up and brought a blessing down.

And when upon some towering joy I've stood,

And waved my banner like a victor there,—



And saw stars drop from heaven like blasted fruit,—  
And angels, sandelled with divinity,  
Walking self-poised on glory's battlements.  
Slip in a moment, un-upheld, and fall  
Into the black deeps where no mercy comes,—  
Then have I seemed a child, and cried aloud,  
As if my tower tottered at my feet ;  
And He, the tender One, hath taken me  
Without a word within His human arms,  
And put me in a valley, where the streams  
Were deep and still, among the trodden flowers,  
And silent symbols of humility.  
There o'er me, broken, stood the Sinless One ;—  
O'er my deformity He beauty threw,  
' O'er falsehood truth,—o'er guile sincerity,'—  
And in my empty life He poured His peace,—  
His brightness beamed through the anatomy  
Of my poor heart, like sunrise through the woods ;—  
There, haloed with His light, I lay beneath  
The broad divinities of God compressed  
Into a oneness comprehensible.  
And when I walked the dark highways alone,  
The past like an avenger chased my soul,



Until I ran into His open heart,  
And fell down there in panting helplessness.  
The arrow shot at me struck quivering  
In Him, and there in Him He bade me dwell.  
He went with me into my darkest hour,  
And in my lone Gethsemane drank up  
The cup that from me would not pass away.  
But men ne'er dreamed of what they never saw ;  
Soul-struggles sometimes came when all was still,  
And Hèaven nearer to me than by day ;  
Then under cover of the friendly night  
I've gone into the mountains all alone,—  
What joy to be in the mountains by night !  
Alone in the mountains to pray !—alone !  
Where thunder sleeps beside the still small voice,  
Where prophets of old come down from the skies,  
And talk of the visions that glad their eyes,  
When the Cross shall rise upon every hill  
Of the God-wending earth !—To be alone !  
With strong necessities upon our hearts,  
And *feel* alone !—To meet a mailèd foe,  
On a mountain-ridge by night, when winds sigh low,  
And the rising peaks seem crowned with witnesses !

What a joy to wrestle with a mailèd foe !  
And hurl him o'er my thigh to the rocks below !  
What a joy to hear the clashing wings go up !  
And the mailèd foe go down, and stand alone !  
A joy to pray in the mountains alone !  
Men like to struggle as they like to die—  
Alone—among the stillnesses of night.  
God ! when Thou strikest man, Oh ! let it be  
When none can gaze upon the chastisement ;  
Or only such as understand Thy ways.  
The Crucified cried out in pain, " I thirst !"  
And straight men brought him vinegar to drink.  
But even hearts that closest clung to me,  
And seemed to sip their life-blood out of mine.  
Ne'er knew the night-throes, or the sleepless pangs,  
Ere came the blessed joys I sing of now.  
Years came and went like tides, and bore me up  
Each one above the other, like the songs  
Of ancient Judah on the temple stairs,  
Until I reached the holy place of rest.  
There shone o'er my alternate day and night  
The inextinguishable lamp of love.  
My people often whispered out their fear

That I should go mysteriously away ;  
For in the woods they've tracked my feet, and heard  
The outcries of my spirit after God ;  
Such longings as foretold that rest should come  
By their intensity.

And lo ! I stand

Upon the summit of my highest wish ;  
And here behold that Human Heart enthroned  
In calm divinity, which bled for me.  
O Christ ! the music of Thy name doth trill  
Along the heart-chords of Thy universe !  
All worlds, all spirits have a vacant home  
For Thee ! All harmonies do lack one note ;  
All temples have an empty niche for Thee !  
Thou art the crown, the flower, the jewel, the joy  
Of God's creation ! When wilt Thou go down  
And let Thy garments trail among mankind ?  
The blind all night and day feel after Thee ;  
The deaf catch sound from sight, and watch the clouds  
That curtain out the glory of Thy dawn !  
The fettered helpless lie and dream short dreams  
Of liberty ! the dumb groan after Thee !  
The flowers droop, the mad waves are asleep,

And all the earth is waiting like a bride,  
Meek, patient, silent, beautiful for Thee—  
For Thee, their long-desired beloved One!

Unworthy I to sing such worthy love!  
Yet now my task is done I cast my harp,  
My crown, my soul, I can no more resist,  
Before Thee, Thou Divine—Thou Human Christ!"

---

Philetos paused—the song of life was sung!  
In Heaven not a sound was heard that hour,  
While prostrate lay the minstrel and his harp  
In utter love-abandonment and joy.  
The glory of the light-throne tented him;  
And from a rising ambient cloud a Voice,  
Of ancient and eternal dignity,  
Proclaimed the manward movings of God's heart.  
"Ye first-born of My love, go down to earth  
And say, I come! Throw in the seed of Truth  
On every hill and dale, that I may reap  
A glorious harvest. Go, and say I come!"  
And upward, with a shout of joy, there went  
Ten thousand times ten thousand willing wings.

Down Heaven's steep like light they went away;  
 The great worlds rolling in the dark they passed,  
 And kindled, with their glory, into life  
 Chaotic embryos, erst void and still.  
 To earth they came, as gentle as the dew,  
 And dwell among us still, haunting all hearts  
 With melodies, and walk the silent floors  
 With us, sometimes in royal palaces,  
 And oft in prison cells, and on the seas,  
 In frozen solitudes, in halls of state,  
 Where floats the broken wreck, where howls the wolf,  
 Where lies the sleepless shadow of a king,  
 Where dies the friendless peasant in his hut,  
 In moods of mighty joy, in pangs of grief,—  
 Wherever beats a Godward pulse in man  
 There do they come, soft-footed as the dawn.

And now, great world, I've sung to thee for very love;  
 And pray, if rest can make thee beautiful,  
 That God will take thy heart of many lives,  
 And hush it into silent rest in Him.

Τῷ Θεῷ Δόξα.

THE END.

*October, 1875.*

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